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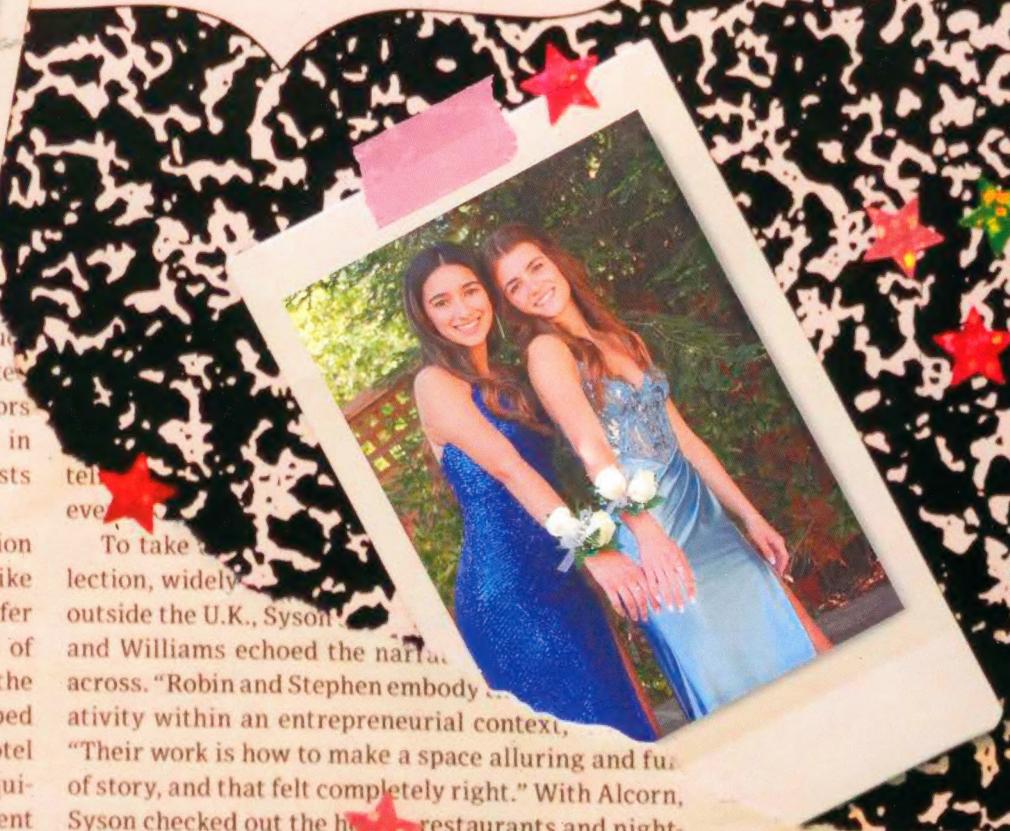
COMPOSITION BOOK

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PROM



our years ago, when news of the commission announced, Roman and Williams seemed like a logical choice for the Met. Alesch and Standefer best known for creating the visual worlds of *Zoolander*, Ben Stiller's 2001 sendup of the fashion industry, for such perpetually mobbed Manhattan hangouts as the Dutch, the Ace Hotel's lounge atop the Standard hotel colloquially known as the Boom Boom Room. Permanent exhibition spaces were typically the province of house designers, but Roman and Williams represented something the British Galleries were short engagement. Though the museum doesn't track



In December 2011, he

STARE-WORTHY Opposite, from Lansdowne House, a notable in London's Mayfair; a staircase century sculpture Edward Pearson

*In loving memory of our friend and colleague,
Natalie Hiatt*

Thank you for the eternal light you brought to us all

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Prom: A Night Under the Stars

Cover by Emma Uffelman, Mara Korzeniowska, and Nastia Grits; Left photo: Autumn Long, Right photo: Alicia Cervenka
Cover Layout: Mara Korzeniowska, Emma Uffelman, and Nastia Grits

"Goodbye Dons!"

Associate Principal Mike Plant departs from Acalanes

Melina Nath | Print News Editor

As students pass the senior deck each morning, Associate Principal Mike Plant stands in the hallway, greeting each person who passes by with a wave and a cheerful "Good morning." Plant has become a familiar face not only on the walk to first period classes, but at all times around campus, something students and staff will miss next school year.

After four years as Associate Principal, Plant will move on from Acalanes High School at the end of the 2021-2022 school year to become the principal at Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School.

Prior to his administrative work at Acalanes, Plant had an extensive background in education. After graduating college, Plant taught for a year in England before moving to America. He then taught math at Miramonte High School for 20 years before coming to Acalanes in the fall of 2018 to serve as Associate Principal.

"It was hard to leave the classroom because you get that daily connection with young people. That's really wonderful. But [Associate Principal] is a really challenging job, and I wanted a challenge...I wanted to be involved in certain decisions about how a school runs," Plant said.

Once at Acalanes, Plant led the Acalanes Resource Center (ARC) mentorship program along with other staff, which helped students prioritize which Academies to attend for additional support. Colleagues describe it as an extended peer tutoring program.

"These were students who just needed an extra push or needed some additional help [with] understanding content or materials in classrooms. [Sometimes,] they just needed a social connection in order to feel that they were able to achieve in whatever class," former Principal Travis Bell said. "He had this idea and this vision of trying to bring students to help support other students, which is a great idea, especially when you're looking at public education and resources... He wanted to run with it, and he did it."

Although the ARC program ended during the transition to distance learning in March 2020, Plant played an essential role in both the shift into distance learning and the transition back to school through March 2021's hybrid learning

model.

"We had a ton of district support, but Mr. Plant had to learn Canvas so that [the District could] help support teachers in implementing Canvas for their classroom. Obviously, that's huge, because that was our primary mode of teaching all [throughout] last school year...[and] as we rolled back to school, Canvas [was] still a highly effective tool that we [could] use," Bell said.

As Associate Principal, Plant controlled logistics at Acalanes. This includes working with the front office, overseeing attendance, and managing school-wide testing. Although Plant's role as associate principal demanded primarily behind-the-scenes planning, he prioritized making connections with students and teachers around campus.

"As an administrator, you get so busy, it's tempting sometimes to just close your door and get into your spreadsheets. I do that work too, but visibility and being connected was a really important driving force for me...a value for me is to be out and be positive," Plant said.

Colleagues note the importance of Plant's optimistic outlook to the Acalanes staff and students.

"[Plant] was actually in the interview room when I first got hired in the school district... He was teaching at Miramonte [and] we got to know each other during my one year there," Math and Engineering teacher Misha Buchel said. "He's just a super focused individual, administrator, and teacher [when] trying to [create] the best experience for the students both in and out of the classroom."

Students recall specific instances of Plant's accessibility to the student body and his always-sunny disposition.

"He is always cheerful, outgoing, and nice to everybody. I love when he stands in the halls in the morning and says 'Good morning, have a great day kids,'" sophomore Sophie Hendrickson said.

Throughout his time at Acalanes, Plant worked closely with Associate Principal Andrea Powers, who also came to Acalanes in 2018. Powers attributes their success as Associate Principals to their strong, collaborative partnership, popularly known as the 'Power-Plant' of the school.

"Mr. Plant and I clicked immediately. We have very similar personalities and we both see our role very similarly, [like] what we're here for and why we're here to do our job," Powers said. "One thing that I admire greatly about Mr. Plant is his ability to walk up to any student and just engage



Blueprint Photo/Mara Korzeniowska

[with them]...He remembers names like I've never seen before with anyone, and it's fantastic. He does a fantastic job of really grounding himself when he needs to on why we do this job, which is for the students," Powers said.

Former colleagues express that Plant's beloved qualities within the community will make him a strong leader in his upcoming role.

"I think he's really good at holding a vision in front of him...and I think that's going to serve his community well," Bell said. "He really cares about students, and being a principal is great for that because... you have to care about the individual and know that that person is showing up as a whole person... I know he'll have great success in that."

As Plant reflects on his time at Acalanes, he expresses both sadness as he steps away from high school administration and excitement for his next role.

"I've built strong relationships here [at Acalanes]...so it's hard to walk away from that," Plant said. "[This job] is also my chance to be the leader, set the tone, and set the expectations for staff and for students in terms of conduct, behavior, and how we do things around [the school]. I'm excited. I think I can bring positive energy and enthusiasm to that."

A Farewell to Fran and Mary

Mary McCosker and Fran Taylor retire after 24 years of leading the Peer Tutoring program

Zach Snyder and Saylen Cardoni | Managing Editor and Head Liaison Editor

A student aimlessly meanders through the halls, lost in thought with confusion over their classwork of the day. Upon passing through the doors of the glass hall and entering Room 6, the student finds a safe place to learn amongst their peers with a welcoming environment and friendly tutors. This unique space on campus is the result of 24 years of Acalanes community members Fran Taylor and Mary McCosker's work.

Peer Tutoring advisors Taylor and McCosker plan to retire at the end of the 2021-2022 school year, hoping to dedicate more time for themselves and their families.

Peer Tutoring is an on-campus resource

that provides students with an opportunity to learn one-on-one from their peers. Students can visit the Peer Tutoring center before school, during lunch and seventh period, and after school every day for assistance with their classwork. Program leaders Taylor and McCosker decided that this year was the right time to take a step back from education and enjoy retirement.

"Speaking for myself...it just seemed like I wanted more time to do other things. I have grandchildren who live on the East Coast, [so] it would be nice to be able to travel to see them. Maybe after all these years, it's just time for somebody else to have some new ideas," McCosker said.

Over the years, Taylor and McCosker have helped a wide variety of students, creating personal connections with many of them. Both Taylor and McCosker have found their work in Peer Tutoring to be fulfilling.

"It's been a really rewarding experience. In fact, it's really hard for me to leave because I have enjoyed working with high school students, but specifically with all the tutors we've had over the years," McCosker said. "Some of them are in their forties now. It has

just always been such a wonderful group of kids, and it's nice to feel like you're helping kids, academically and sometimes socially. It keeps me young to work with young people."

Throughout their time at Acalanes, Taylor and McCosker have adapted to eight principals, multiple changes in location, and a new block schedule, while constantly maintaining a dynamic program and giving greater meaning to both of their roles. They prioritized providing a welcoming feel with instances of their light-hearted nature, and now reflect on their interactions with students.

"This happened many times, but particularly the first time, [there] was a kid named Teddy [who] he came in one day, and Mary and I both happened to be there. We are not often here together. He walked in, turned totally white, and he said 'Oh my god, there are two of you.' That is a true story and it still happens. That was funny," Taylor said.

Students will remember Taylor and McCosker for their friendliness and their willingness to help others.

"Fran and Mary would interact with me and were also very helpful, making sure I was staying on task and would assist me with whatever they could. They would offer snacks so everyone wouldn't get hungry and were always very nice and caring," junior Luke Dulik said.

In addition to helping students with their work, Taylor and McCosker guided tutors to be stronger teachers for their peers. The pair also taught tutors lessons in areas other than school work, such as accountability.

"Fran and Mary have made me a better peer tutor by challenging me and keeping me accountable. Many times in Peer Tutoring I've learned to tackle problems head-on when I need to help students with material I haven't seen in years," peer tutor and junior Mary Laska said. "Fran and Mary also keep us peer tutors accountable. I remember once I forgot about my shift, and when Mary texted me, I felt terrible. Out of that experience, I learned a lesson in maturity and responsibility to the program and the students who rely on it."

In regards to the future of the program, students and tutors alike hope that the pro-

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Blueprint Photo/Mara Korzeniowska

End of the Year Senior Events

Celebrating the graduating Class of 2022

Jake Boselli and Abbey Palmer | Sports Copy Editor and Staff Writer

After four years consisting of late-night studying, on-and-off Zoom classes, and running through the halls of Acalanes between class periods, the Class of 2022's high school experience draws to a close.

Leadership plans a series of events to celebrate the Class of 2022 leading up to graduation on May 27, including a senior picnic, senior sunset, a Time of Reflection, senior awards, and a car rally.

In light of the Class of 2022's atypical high school experience with the rise of a global pandemic and a staggered return to school, Leadership aims to throw them a celebration to remember.

"Especially not being on campus for many years now and not having that full high school experience, [Senior Leadership] is trying to make sure they can have really fun activities that would be memorable," Leadership teacher Kat Bautista said.

The Senior Awards will take place on May 18. Leadership also planned a class-

wide picnic.

"We will have Mexican food for the seniors and also a couple of games that are a surprise. Also, there will be a bunch of yearbook signing at the picnic," Senior Class Secretary and senior Rhett Skvarna said.

Another highly-anticipated event is the time of reflection on May 22.

"I am planning [the] time of reflection ... I have to coordinate with Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church to book a date, book the rehearsal, make sure all the technology things run smoothly, and make publicity for the event" Senior Vice-President Brooke Palma said. "It's going to be really fun. All parents get to come, and students will reminisce about their four years [at Acalanes], talk about nice experiences. There will [also] be student performances, staff speeches, and student speeches."

Following the time of reflection, Leadership students invite seniors to watch the sunset that evening on the Acalanes field. This event replicates the longstanding tradition of seniors gathering to watch the sunrise towards the end of the school year.

Along with these activities, there will be themed dress-up days throughout the week for the senior class to participate in.

"One of the dress themes is a Zoom

themed day. [It is] wearing business on the top, party on the bottom," Skvarna said.

Seniors will also have the opportunity to decorate their cap and gowns in Room 314.

"We will provide a bunch of supplies. Students can come decorate, and then we will collect their grad caps as well just to check them and then we will give them back to them for their rehearsal," Bautista said.

Seniors recognize the impact of returning to school for the entirety of their final year at Acalanes.

"The highlight of my senior year has been the football season, and getting to play with all of my friends. Coming to school, sitting at lunch with all of my friends, and being able to talk about [my] day in person is just a highlight of mine," senior Evan Malmquist said.

As seniors approach graduation, they reflect on their experience at Acalanes.

"I'm going to miss my friends the most when we all go off to different schools in the fall and I don't get to see them every day," senior Sammy Hess said. "[However], I am super excited to graduate and have all my hard work paid off. It's a relief, to say the least, to almost be done with high school, but in a bittersweet way."

MAY 2022						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18 Senior Awards	19	20 Senior Picnic Senior Car Rally	21
22 Time of Reflection Senior Sunset	23	24	25	26	27 Graduation Grad Night	28
29	30	31				

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The Return of the Special Olympics

*Special Olympics on campus
for the first time in three years*

Reid Aldrich and Zubin Acuña |
Online News Editor and Staff Writer

Met with a roar of cheers as they make their way down the track, hundreds of special education students celebrate the commencement of the Special Olympics. After police officers aided a student in completing the annual torch run and united the schools for a friendly competition, the games begin.

Acalanes hosted the Special Olympics on April 22 for special education students across Contra Costa County, giving them a chance to compete for the first time in three years.

Students from 14 schools around the county competed in a variety of events, including a long jump, a 50 meter dash, a 100 meter dash, shot put, a javelin throw, and a wheelchair race.

The Contra Costa County Schools Partnership Program selected Acalanes as a host for the Special Olympics in 2013, and 2022 will be the eighth Special Olympics to take place at Acalanes.

"We choose location by the hosting school's support, desire to host, and Leadership help. We also like to host at schools that have special education classes on campus and also schools nearby that have classes and can walk to the event," Special Olympics Schools Partnership Program Coordinator for Contra Costa County Sherri Roberti said.

The Schools Partnership Program had to cancel the Special Olympics in 2021 due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. However, Acalanes Leadership hosted a private event for Acalanes Special Education students.

"There was a small group of Leadership and other students helping cheer on and helping the students compete against each other. Students would participate in relays, sprints, long jumps and more," senior Patrick Nicosia said.

Even though other schools could not participate at the time, the events created a sense of normalcy for the two Special Ed-



ucation classes at Acalanes. The two classes provide support to Special Education students, teaching specifically to their educational needs.

"It was nice that they honored a special event just for us. Even though we couldn't have [the Special Olympics] in its entirety, it was nice to have the extra attention going to us to go out and play, participate, and have fun," Essential Skills Teacher Margret Cerecitos said.

After the pandemic's postponement of the events, the Special Olympics Schools Partnership Program Contra Costa County worked behind the scenes to organize the return of the Special Olympics at Acalanes in 2022.

"[Planning] begins with coordinating with schools, leadership teachers, administration and then setting a date, getting permits from the different districts, emails to teachers to announce the event and to sign up their classes, coordinating set up, training students, and lots of organization," Roberti said. "We [then] bring all the [specific] equipment, and we borrow the school's chairs, tables, bleachers, etc."

While Contra Costa County prepares the games through the organization of the

Blueprint Photo/Arlyne Noguera
event, the teachers work with their students to prepare them for competition. While the classroom teachers get the students excited for the events, an Adapted Physical Education (APE) teacher mentors the athletes through specialized physical education programs.

"Within my classroom I select the athletes that are going to participate in the Olympics. Then I coordinate with the APE teacher. He helps [coach] the students for the big day," Essential Skills Teacher Marissa Allen said.

To allow the teachers to remain with their students throughout the competition's preparation stage, Leadership organized volunteers to help set up and run the Special Olympics.

"Leadership has been a great participant in helping prepare for the big day. There are lots of students who have volunteered. Anywhere from creating signs to putting together gift bags for all of the athletes," Allen said.

While some Leadership students created decorations and gifts, many others spent the day working with the athletes and running the events.

Continued on 7

A Celebration of Cultures From Around the World

Leadership hosts the Acalanes Cultural Fair

August Walker and Justin Law | Staff Writers

Music in the air, plates of foreign dishes, and colorful booths representing countries around the globe filled the front quad during this year's highly anticipated Acalanes Cultural Fair.

A collection of student-run booths in the front quad made up Leadership's Cultural Fair on April 28, giving visitors an opportunity to interact with different cultures through music, food, and activities.

The Cultural Fair returned for the first time in two years due to the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. Leadership organizes the fair, but students sign up to present each country and its culture.

"The booths have information about a particular country. [Students] put up a board, have samples of food, and sometimes have a trivia game related to the country. Often, [the booths also] have photo albums or examples of typical

clothes from the countries," Spanish teacher Elizabeth Gough said.

The fair also had cultural activities that people could take part in. Pétanque, a French game similar to bocce ball, was a popular attraction for visitors. A mariachi band kept the fair lively, playing music for the duration of the event.

"I thought [the Cultural Fair] was very interesting. I got to learn a lot about different cultures which I hadn't learned about before... I liked the Brazil booth because it had a lot of cultural foods like pão de queijo," sophomore Nicholas Pires said.

Visitors note the large crowd that attended the fair, which caused some overcrowding.

"I think it's just so amazing how all the cultures can be represented... They go above and beyond with the information they give," sophomore Tucker Brewer said. "[However], I think it could be a bit smaller, there were too many people [at once]."

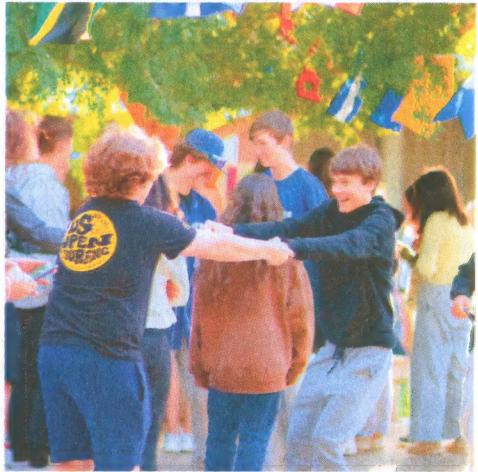
Students who attended express the importance of learning about other cultures through the unique platform the Cultural Fair provides.

"I [brought] some Semita de Piña which is pineapple pastry from El Salvador... because I'm El Salvadorian and I wanted to bring something," junior Olivia Banks said. "[The cultural fair is about] exposing Acalanes to different cultures and the people in them, [all] the underappreciated cultures that we have in the school. [It gives us] a chance to celebrate things that are not talked about usually."

Although anyone was invited to attend the celebration, language teachers encouraged their students to interact with the fair as part of their courses to further student interaction with the country they study.

"We do a cultural project this semester so our students are encouraged to participate and get to know culture. We do this throughout our curriculum, but outside of our classrooms, we are encouraging students to get involved with culture and the language. One of the many options the students have is to participate in the Cultural Fair," Spanish teacher Heidi Skvarna said.

Unfortunately, a few traditional activities did not take place due to a variety of factors, including a struggle with rescheduling and the students' busy academic schedules during the end of the second semester.



Blueprint Photo/Arlyne Noguera

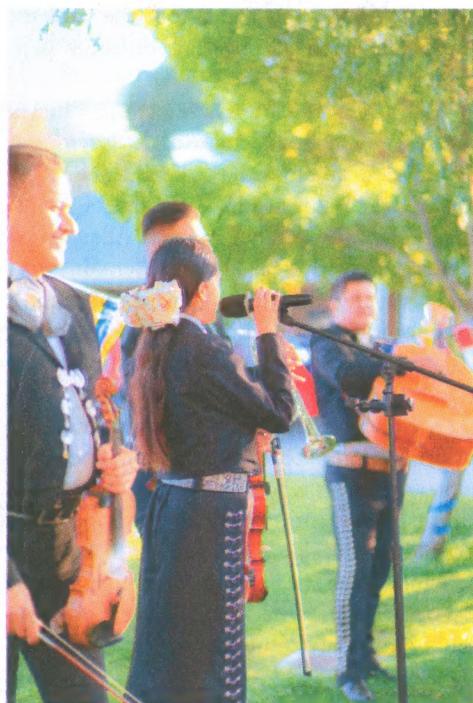
"I think every student should have more knowledge about other cultures and other countries and also more understanding for other cultures... Originally, [Leadership] asked me to have students do [the] Lion Dance, but we [were] not able to do this this year because we [had] trouble borrowing the equipment and everything... all the students are very busy, especially in this time period," Mandarin teacher Ma-Chen Tu said.

Regardless of the end-of-semester chaos, teachers believe that the fair is a great way of teaching students new things about cultures different from their own.

"I think it is important to support student activities and I think it's important for students to be aware that they should celebrate each other's cultures and celebrate each other's similarities and differences," Skvarna said.



Blueprint Photo/Arlyne Noguera



Blueprint Photo/Arlyne Noguera

Special Olympics

Continued from 5

"The community outreach board helped find volunteers, and students in Leadership all pitched in, set up, volunteered and cleaned up," junior Charlotte McKenzie said.

Many student athletes in the Acalanes classes competed in prior Special Olympics, but represented their elementary or middle school. As high school students for this year's event, the athletes could compete in the 100 meter dash, the long jump, the relay, and the shot put. Despite participating before, athletes still felt the pressure of competition.

"I did the 100 meter dash, the standing jump, and the shotput.... I felt very excited and nervous at the same time," athlete and sophomore Drew Krantzman said.

Although athletes enjoyed participating in a variety of events, some found to like certain events more than others.

"I liked the relay and the other running

and the jumping. [but] I really liked the jumping [most]," athlete and frosh Ainsley Dodge said.

While the Special Olympics was a time to participate in athletic competitions, some athletes felt the most important part was reuniting with peers from other schools in between events.

"My favorite part was seeing my old friends," athlete and frosh Fauna Miles said.

Volunteers shared the same excitement as the athletes, especially watching all the students have a great time interacting with each other.

"I think it's amazing how many schools come together just for this amazing day and awesome event," junior Owen Estee said. "I think big community events, when everyone is brought together and has a good time, is the best for any community and we really need [that] right now."

Volunteers and participants alike look forward to the reestablishment of the Special



Blueprint Photo/Arlyne Noguera

Olympics as a yearly tradition going forward.

"I am excited to do it again next year... I had fun doing all of the events and I would enjoy doing it again," Krantzman said.

Peer Tutoring

Continued from 3

gram maintains its friendly atmosphere and strong student involvement as it had under Taylor and McCosker.

"I'm hoping Peer Tutoring will continue to run, as most days it is full of people. They've set up an amazing system, and have perfected it over the years," peer tutor and junior Benjamin Hird said.

While new students at Acalanes will not get to experience the joys of Taylor and McCosker, those who connected with them will relive the memories of the welcoming Peer Tutoring program and the kindness they brought to the Acalanes campus.

"I am sorry to see Fran and Mary retire as they will be missed as they always brought a laid-back and caring presence to the Peer Tutoring room. I remember before the pandemic, my freshman year, they would pass out pretzels and would insist everyone to take a jolly rancher before heading to class," Dulik said.

With new leaders assuming the advisory role, McCosker and Taylor hope that the program continues to promote the ideals of a welcoming place for all students to learn.

"It was always about the students, their success, and making Acalanes a place where everyone can succeed," Taylor said. "That was our motto, so I feel like [the new advisors] will also feel that way."

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Community Bids Farewell to Allen Choi

Students commemorate Wellness Coordinator's impact on the program

Marisa Guerra Echeverria | Head Section Editor

Wellness Coordinator Allen Choi will depart from Acalanes at the end of the 2021-2022 school year to further pursue therapy opportunities.

Choi has worked in the Acalanes Union High School District's wellness centers for the past four years, becoming Wellness Center Coordinator at Acalanes in the fall of 2019. Choi combined his managerial skills and his therapy expertise from previous careers to coordinate the Center, but will ultimately leave Acalanes to pursue a career as a private therapist.

"I'm leaving because the program is growing and what it takes to help the Center be what it needs to be is a focus on being able to take a step back and be more administrative and managerial [when] you're helping guide people," Choi said. "I don't think I'd be able to do the center justice if I didn't really focus more of my time on the administrative and managerial side."

Under his administration, whether it was during the isolation of COVID-19 or student crises in the return to in-person school, Choi created unique initiatives to provide student support.

"During COVID, I tried to do all these random activity groups... We tried to have anxiety groups [and] right now we have in-person grief groups. We've had discussions when there have been racist incidents in the community," Choi said.

In the event of a student crisis, Choi drops everything to help. Wellness Center attendees note that Choi's top priority is students' needs.

"Something that I will always remember about Allen is that he can do it all. If he needs to be firm and strict, he will be firm and strict but then if he needs to be kind and gentle he will be kind and gentle, depending on the students' needs," junior Chiara Depagne said.

Wellness Center attendees value Choi's student-focused approach to therapy and his empathetic humor to guide them through

whatever troubles they face.

"I am going to miss his really good advice. If you are just having a down day and you need someone to talk to, he gives really good advice. But also his humor, he incorporates humor into his advice so he is not too therapist-y or serious," sophomore Elyssa Gutman said.

According to student attendees, Choi's creation of an inclusive environment at the school and his connection to students make the Center a welcome environment for all visitors.

"He's always talking with people and making sure that everyone is okay... He just really knows how to connect with people no matter where they are from and who they are, what they identify as," junior Natalie Costales said.

Although students will miss Choi's on-campus presence, many have faith in the Wellness Center's future and Choi's pursuits beyond Acalanes.

"I'm going to miss [Allen] so much. But I also have a lot of faith in Allen, so I know that no matter what he is going to do next he is going to do it well, and I know that whoever he leaves in charge of the Wellness Center... is going to be amazing because [Allen] knows how to do it well," Depagne said.

New Peer Tutoring Coordinators

Welcoming Angela Ketcham and Kristen Labrosse for the 2022-2023 school year

Helen O'Neal | Online Editor-in-Chief

As previous Peer Tutoring coordinators Fran Taylor and Mary McCosker retire after 24 years in the role. Former Acalanes Parents Club (APC) co-presidents Angela Ketcham and Kristen Labrosse will take over as coordinators of the program beginning Fall 2022.

Ketcham and Labrosse chose to take on the

role of coordinator to continue their involvement within the Acalanes community and engage more closely with the student body.

"With the parents club, I don't work directly with students. I work indirectly with them. Of course, I'm on campus all the time. I see them and I talked to them. I'm continually impressed by the students at school, and how hard they work, the energy they have, their positivity, and how mature they are. So I'm looking forward just to be able to interact with them a little bit more," Labrosse said.

At the Peer Tutoring center, the coordinators will work alongside student tutors. Ketcham looks forward to working with these tutors and seeing camaraderie between the students.

"I really look forward to working with the

kids, mentoring the kids, [and] watching the kids grow, but also watching them help other kids, so working to help the peer tutors be the best that they can be and just watching them also make a difference in the other students' lives," Ketcham said.

The coordinators hope to maintain a positive environment for academic support, but also relieve stress from high school's pressures.

"I know that high school is extremely stressful," Labrosse said. "Whether the stress is academic, or if [you're] trying to get organized, or if it's just some days you need a place to check out for a little bit and have lunch... I'm excited to be a part of that, help alleviate some of that stress, or just be a part of their lives and hopefully be a positive contributor to their experience."

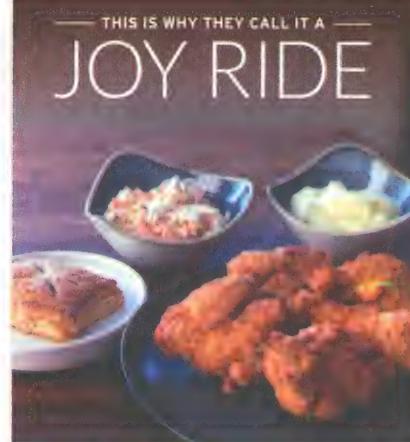
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Prom: A Night Under the Stars

Students celebrate a 'normal' prom

Lulu Levy, Josephine Teran, and Grace Chehlaoui | Online Feature

Section Editor, Online Arts Section Editor, Staff Writer

A blur enters the corner of her eyes. A crowd huddles around the pool. A boy runs onto the diving board, and a large splash follows. A moment of silence ensues as he holds a poster with the question *Prom?* written on it. Suddenly, the word "Yes!" fills the air, and the crowd cheers. This is an Acalanes promposal and just one of the many that occurred in the weeks leading up to the long-awaited Saturday night.

Following weeks of preparation including budgeting, promposals, and outfit selections, Acalanes juniors and seniors attended prom on April 30 at Lake Chalet in Oakland.

During the 2020-2021 school year, the COVID-19 pandemic put several limitations on school events, including prom. Instead of hosting an event with juniors and seniors, Acalanes held an outdoor senior ball and canceled prom completely. In turn, many juniors came up with alternative options to celebrate.

"I'm really excited [for prom], especially since last year we didn't get to do a prom ... My friends and I did our own little prom ... we dressed up and went to my friend's backyard. It was just a little party, but it was still sweet," senior Brooke Blacklidge said.

While some held small celebrations with close friends, others attended events with their sports team.

"Instead of prom last year, we actually did something with our sports team because most of my friends who were seniors last year did track. What we did was we held a track prom. It was super fun," senior Katrina Ortman said.

A full year after celebrating these non-conventional prom nights as juniors, current seniors relished the opportunity to par-

take in a more quintessential prom night experience this year.

"I am excited to achieve the Acalanes prom experience because I feel like I kind of diverged from the desire to experience so many school activities from COVID, but since coming back to school and being friends and reconnecting growth the people I didn't really talk to as much, I'm excited and looking forward to hanging out with that group again," Blacklidge said.

To help facilitate the return of large student events such as prom, parent volunteers acted as liaisons for each grade level. The volunteers coordinated with student class officers and an event planner to organize the evening's activities.

"We work with a prom planner, kind of an event planner. He does the majority of working with the different vendors and the venue. I just work with him, and then I work with the Leadership kids on what their vision of the prom is, what activities they want to have there, and making sure that that happens," Senior Parent Liaison Jill Milnes said.

Planning for the event starts early in the school year, and oftentimes coordinators have to book venues several years in advance.

"We started planning in November, but we had our venue booked in September. Usually, we have our venues booked for the next four years. So, usually, we'll have it booked way ahead of time," junior class president Sierra Lashinsky said.

The school requires funding to host prom each year. Traditionally, prom ticket revenues from the previous year funds the event for the current year.

"Every year, we use the seniors' ticket revenue [from the last prom] to go towards [the current] prom, and then we save up our [junior] money for prom next year. This year, it wasn't really different because it's not the two groups' [revenue] com-





bined. It's just the grade above that buys it for both grades," Lashinsky said.

This year, COVID-19 continues to create challenges for prom. The initial location for the 2022 event was the Exploratorium in San Francisco, but new policies on vaccine mandates instigated a quick venue change.

"[COVID-19] was a challenge because it was originally supposed to be in the city at the Exploratorium. We had it booked there, and then they kind of changed, so that in order to have it in the city, we would have to have the food outside. We wanted kids that weren't vaccinated to be able to come too if they had a negative test. We didn't want to leave anybody out," Milnes said.

While this booking challenge was a setback, the parent liaisons found out that Lake Merritt's lakeside venue in Oakland was available for booking.

"We had to scramble to find a new date and a new venue, so that is how we came up with Lake Chalet," Milnes said.

Another challenge that planners ran into was not receiving enough ticket revenue this year. This year, other Lamorinda schools booked senior events on the same night, impacting the number of people in attendance at Acalanes' prom. Couples going to separate schools had to split up for the night, lowering ticket sales.

"Our prom is on the same night as ... Campo's senior ball. That's why we didn't sell as many tickets this year, because couples are splitting up for the night," Lashinsky said.

Almost one hundred fewer students attended prom than planners expected. However, this turned out to be a positive, as the location, Lake Chalet, is more compact than previous prom locations.

"We would have normally had a lot more kids [at prom], but I think kids are sticking to their proms or going to someone else's prom. We are at five-hundred-sixty [kids],

but we thought we would have had six-hundred-fifty. But it's okay. I think a smaller number will be better for where we have it. The location is a bit smaller than usual," Milnes said.

A common prom tradition each year is promposals. Often with elaborate posters or surprises, students ask each other to attend prom together as a date or as friends. This year, Leadership hosted a competition where students could submit videos or photos of their promposals. Administrators then reviewed these submissions and granted two free tickets to the best promposal, prompting a series of creative promposals within the student body.

"I was going to put letters around the school for our six-month anniversary. I would write things about why I love Katrina and all that. Then it ended up being our five-month anniversary, but I still thought it would be fun for prom. I hid letters around school," senior Robert Means said.

Junior Luca Mathias promposed to his girlfriend Hailey Stripling during a trip to the beach.

"I asked her on the beach by throwing her a ball and I had the question transcribed on it," junior Luca Mathias said.

For couples that are not in the same grade or go to different schools, the school allowed students to invite outside guests and underclassmen for a fee of 125 dollars. They required the signature of the guest's school administrators.

"I [brought] Claire Diamantidis from Campolindo High School ... I had to go to Campo just to get all the papers signed off by her principal. It was fine I guess, but it just took a while just to be able to go [to prom]" junior Cole Gannon said.





Blueprint Photo/Mara Korzeniowska

While some students brought guests from within the Acalanes Union High School District (AUHSD) school district, others brought friends and dates from all over the Bay Area.

"I am taking one of my friends who goes to another school. She goes to Head Royce ... I think it will be awesome, just meeting new people. Obviously, I've been in this town since second grade, so I know a lot of the people here, so it will be nice to meet new people, see who my friends bring, and be able to see and meet new people," senior Matt Brock-Utne said.

Acalanes is currently the only school in the AUHSD to combine the traditional junior prom and senior ball into one dance. Although merging junior and senior classes for prom is nontraditional, some students enjoyed having both grades present.

"I knew it was going to be nice compared to the other ones because I knew that with the grades combined that we were going to have more funding, so with the two groups there. I was excited with both grades. I know some people were saying they wished it was just our grade, but I think that would have been fun, but it was nice having the seniors there too," junior Zach Murdin said.

With junior prom and senior ball traditionally being different events with different customs, conflict arose. One issue came up regarding the dress code for the event. Those attending junior proms traditionally wear shorter-length attire, while seniors traditionally wear longer dresses.

"I personally think it is strange because we are the only school that does it. I also think people should be able to wear whatever they want. I also think it feels like a homecoming with a short dress. I wanted to be in a long dress," Lashinsky said.

Despite these prom attire norms, some students chose to break tradition and express their independent fashion sense.

"I've talked to a lot of seniors about wearing a long dress. I knew that there was no set-in-stone dress code at prom, but my concern was that I didn't want to disrespect the seniors because they did not have a formal prom last year," Stripling said.

A handful of other students are fabricating more non-traditional outfits at prom this year with outfits that reflect their personal style. One student wore a brightly-colored suit to reflect her independent fashion approach.

"I ended up getting this bright pink suit from I.Am.Gia that has rhinestones all over it ... my only inspiration would probably be my younger self ... I am consistently just doing things that would make my younger self happy. If five-year-old me could see myself going to prom in a pink rhinestone suit, she would probably have heart palpitations," Blacklidge said.

In many cases, couples planned to coordinate their looks. A common example of this was that people coordinated their accessories to their date's dresses.

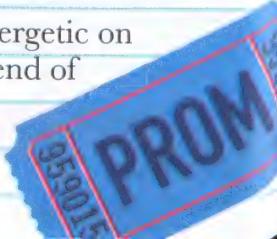
"My dress is a light gold cream color, so his [Robert's] pocket square and his tie are the same color. That way there is a little coordination," Ortman said.

Before prom began, many students chose to get together with friends and take pictures in their outfits.

"I did go to a pre-prom party. I went to my friend's house with a few other of my friends ... It was really fun. We all got to get dressed together and take photos. It made me feel more excited about going to prom. It was also exciting to see what other people were wearing," junior Joy Baker said.

When it came time for the event to begin, students rode in bus groups to the venue.

"My bus ride was pretty energetic on the way there. I sat near the end of the bus in the back, and we





mostly just talked and sang songs. It was fun but not wild," Baker said.

Some buses had high energy, including singing songs, chanting, and engaging with the drivers.

"I was not expecting the bus ride to be as fun as it was ... We came back, and [junior] Sophie Westen was leading cheers. It was super fun. We learned our bus driver's name. We were chanting his name," junior Sofie Foster said.

Once at the event, students had a variety of activities to participate in. One activity available was mosh pit dancing, where many students came together on the dance floor.

"I think [my favorite activity] had to be the mosh pit. The mosh pit was great, and also the dock was really cool being able to go sit out on the lake," junior Landon Santos said.

Alternatively to loud mosh pit dancing, students also enjoyed a silent disco station.

"My favorite activity was just being by the water, especially after the sun went down, and I thought the silent disco was pretty cool. I liked that more than being in the mosh pit," Mathias said.

Other activities that a handful of students participated in were casino games. Many students spent time with each other playing craps.

"Running the craps table was great. Even just chilling with the boys at one of those tables was pretty cool, just hanging out," junior Austin Bishop said.

In addition to playing casino games, students delighted in singing karaoke. A series of students lined up to sing a song of their choice as friends and parent liaisons

listened and sang along.

"I was not expecting the karaoke, and it was much more entertaining than I had initially expected," junior Lauren Kuo said.

A particular memory that attendees recall from prom was when campus supervisor, Andy MacDonald, also known as Mac D, sang in the karaoke area to a variety of hit songs.

"I really enjoyed listening to Mac D sing karaoke. My date and I stood on a table to film him and then got told off by someone who worked there to get off the table," Baker said.



Blueprint Photo/Mara Korzeniowska

Moments at prom such as these make memories that can last a lifetime for high school students. In addition to creating new memories, the evening often offers opportunities to create new friendships.

"You hang out with your friends like going to [prom] and at dinner, but once you start doing new things, you start to hang out with people that you have maybe never talked to before or that you don't normally hang out with, and it's a lot of fun because it kind of breaks down the barriers," social studies teacher Haley Walsh said.

By the end of the night, regardless of whatever expectations students had going into it, many students had basked in the extravagance of the event.

"I expected the venue to be pretty nice because I was talking to the Leadership people and they had spent a lot of time finding a good venue, so I was expecting that to be nice. Other than that, I kind of went in with an open mind and was just excited to have fun with my friends. It was cool," Bishop said.

Making Space for Spaces

The possibility of large change raises questions about space on campus

Alex Ariker, Keith Johnson, and Zack Lara | Staff Writers

Acalanes High School features many classrooms, fields, and spaces for various programs and extracurriculars. However, as more on-campus programs seek to expand, Acalanes is beginning to run out of the space that each group needs to function.

Acalanes administration proposed moving Peer Tutoring into the library to expand the Wellness Center for the 2022-2023 school year. As the plan came into fruition, staff members and faculty voiced their concerns. These concerns brought up a larger issue on how to move forward with some programs without diminishing or hindering others.

When the changes were first proposed, several teachers protested moving Peer Tutoring and removing vital library space. The cause for change was two-fold: concerns over the current Peer Tutoring location and a need to accommodate an expanding Wellness Center.

"My understanding is that there is a need for additional space for Wellness and also that Peer Tutoring is needing a different space because it is both not a welcoming space. It's right now currently in not a windowed room, and it's also a relatively small space," AP Comparative Government and World History teacher Joseph Schottland said.

The size of the Wellness Center's current space has also proven to be a problem, as it bottlenecks the amount of students that it can help.

"We have four people that can provide counseling, but we only have two spaces," Wellness Center Coordinator Allen Choi said.

The change generated opposition from students and staff, especially those who spend their free time on-campus in the library and those who use the library to supplement their teaching.

"I enjoyed how there was always a space

for me to be. I'm a man who doesn't like always being in large groups. The library always served as an escape for me, and I like reading, so they've had a good selection of books to keep me going," senior Kenny Hilton said.

In a similar way, some people worry that moving the Peer Tutoring space to the library may impact the environment of Peer Tutoring as a whole.

"There are students who come in here, especially after school, and they don't really need a tutor necessarily, but they know us and they know the program. They feel comfortable here, it's kind of like a little after school club, so it would take away from the personality of peer tutoring," Head of Peer Tutoring Mary McCosker said.

Space on campus is finite. Acalanes' various programs constantly vie for the best spaces so that they can reach and benefit as many students as possible. However, when too many programs share the same space, some fear that it detriments everyone involved.

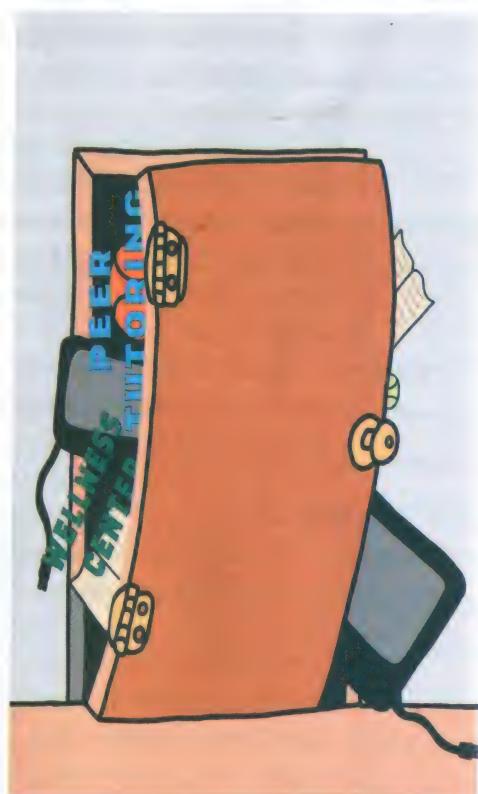
"To me, it becomes a situation of access. Students who are coming in to get books, whether for themselves or for an assignment, are probably going to feel a little restricted from going back there. Especially if they see tutors working there and students being tutored," librarian Barbara Burkhalter said.

In addition to staff, many students also feel the purposes of the library and peer tutoring are diametrically opposed.

"Peer tutoring needs a quiet space where they can focus on helping each other out, learning and studying. I feel like the library a lot of time isn't that, a lot of people come and go and there are often conversations going on in corners," senior Elijah Hassett said.

After discussions with teachers and staff, Acalanes Principal Eric Shawn announced a meeting for teachers to voice their concerns towards on-campus changes.

"I will be hosting a meeting Monday, May 2 and on Tuesday, May 3 right after school in the Collab Center to share the needs for these changes and to listen to any staff who would like to give feedback. Following that feedback session, we will discuss with [instructional council] what the potential changes on-site may be and work together



Blueprint Graphic/Mara Korzeniowska

on a solution," Shawn said.

At the point of publication of this Blueprint issue, Principal Shawn announced through a staff email that there would be no immediate changes to the library while acknowledging the need for further exploration.

"We do need to find a new location for our Peer Tutoring Program. We also need to develop spaces for effective one to one counseling services for students and to run wellness support groups," Shawn said in the email.

The possibility of Peer Tutoring moving into the library has brought a larger issue to the forefront of Acalanes administration, staff, and students: how Acalanes should move forward with space changes without impacting programs. As Acalanes constantly changes the various spaces on campus, staff emphasizes keeping some spaces the same.

"I feel the library is a sacred space. It's the academic heart of this school. It's a place where lots of classes use it. It's a place where we've got a great librarian to make it both academic but also social," Schottland said.

Noah's Bagels: The Cornerstone of the Acalanes Community

The hole-y food that brings people together

Stella Heo | Staff Writer

Student-athletes wipe the sweat off their foreheads and exit the field after their pre-game warm-up to scarf down a quick snack before facing their opponents. Laid out on the table are Gatorade bottles, oranges, and a box of Noah's Bagels. No matter the opponent or the sport, the snacks stand the test of time, enjoyed by athletes, coaches, and the community as a whole.

Noah's Bagels, once a small store on the corner of College Avenue and Alcatraz, has since outgrown its original Berkeley locale and now acts as a cornerstone of the Acalanes community.

Noah Alper, the founder of Noah's Bagels, created the bagel store in 1989 after learning that there was only one bagel store on Telegraph Avenue.

"I felt that there was [a] lot of demand, and I went to designing the store, the look, and feel and combining it with some ancillary products that were typical for New York in terms of great smoked fish and cream cheese: schmears we call them," Alper said to Blueprint.

When starting the store, Alper wanted it to be a kosher shop, which means food that com-

plies with a strict set of dietary rules in Judaism, because of bagels' close connection to Jewish culture.

"I had taken a trip to Israel, and I got very excited about my Jewish heritage ... after that trip and pursued it. Part of that exploration involved kosher food and the feeling that in order to make [the bagels] authentic it had to be kosher," Alper said. "Bagels were only to be found in Jewish neighborhoods in largely East Coast cities ... It was Jewish bakers, it was Jewish neighborhoods, and it wasn't a mainstream item. It became a mainstream item only in the last 30 years."

Many of Alper's customers recognized his efforts in keeping a kosher store, and although kosher customers only made up a small portion of his audience, Alper recognized their significance.

"Not many Jewish people keep kosher ... but it's a very loyal number, and there were visitors who would be coming through the Bay Area and [were] not able to find a lot of kosher food, so the fact that they could, they were very grateful for. I did get a lot of 'love letters' about that, so [kosher customers were] not a huge part of the business but a very loyal clientele," Alper said.

As the store became more popular, Alper broke away from tradition and added bagel flavors like blueberry and chocolate chip. Noah's Bagels also expanded from Berkeley to Los Angeles, with the company even being the largest kosher retailer in the U.S. when Alper sold the company to Einstein Bros. Bagels in 1996. Since its sale to the nation-wide chain, Noah's Bagels is no longer kosher within its 56 locations across California.

"We only opened stores that we felt we could really put all of our attention to and make them as great as possible, and so it was a very slow, organic process. I think the [key reasons for the store's success] probably were great products, great service, and very good locations [as well as] a great team that was able to put this all together," Alper said.

Even as the company grew, Alper emphasized the communal aspect of the store.

"Another key to our success was that we really got involved with our local communities in terms of not only free bagels for the little league,

the library, you name it, but we would also do community service projects," Alper said. "Charity is an integral part of Jewish tradition. Our Jewish tradition is really all about action, not so much about faith ... and so it just came naturally to add that to the employee experience to do these kinds of things."

Indeed, many Acalanes students recognize the store as an essential part of the Lafayette community.

"I think Noah's Bagels is such a popular food ... because they are somewhat of a community staple, and they have always tried to support the town. It is also somewhere that is a gathering place for so many residents, and many people around here know and love them," senior Alexia Dunlavey said.

The store's location in downtown Lafayette also makes it an easy destination for residents.



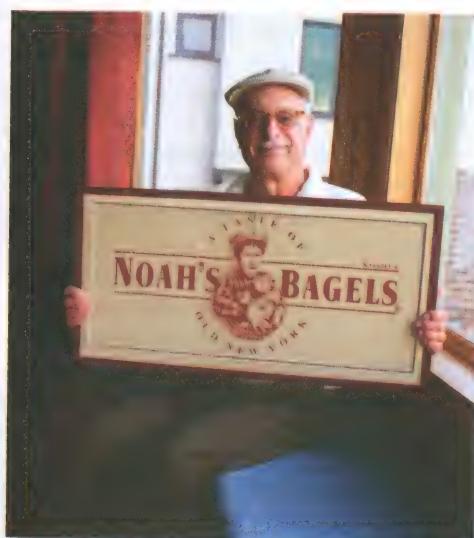
Blueprint Photo/Graham Klingler

"I think Noah's is popular because it's directly in the city center next to other popular places, so it's convenient, especially since in Lafayette, there is a large market for "hangout places" where the Stanley kids can go after school. Not to mention, bagels are a pretty easy food. You don't necessarily have to be in the mood for it," senior Mika Eloyan said.

The local Noah's Bagels store is also only one of two stores in Lafayette that specialize in bagels, leaving it the go-to bagel store. Community members also feel that the bagels are higher quality than those found in grocery stores, such as Safeway.

"Our community doesn't seem to have many bagel places specifically. We have a lot of bakeries and sit-down breakfast places, but not

Continued on 17



Courtesy Photo/Cathleen Maclearie

Exploring New Paths

Seniors look to paths beyond four-year colleges

Connor Faust and Kylie Choi | Feature Copy Editor and Staff Writer

As the question “Hey, where are you going to college?” floats around the hallways, a number of students raise the conversation of having plans besides attending a four-year college.

During the 2022 graduation season, many Acalanes students plan to look away from the traditional four-year college plan, choosing alternative studies or employment opportunities ranging from military service to a focused educational program in culinary studies.

One path for Acalanes seniors lies within the branches of the U.S. military. This year, several students at Acalanes plan to attend the Naval Academy, where students learn to maintain standards of military performance while receiving an education.

“We do have three students that are going into the Naval Academy this year, which is a huge accomplishment and not very common to have three students,” Acalanes College and Career Counselor Debbie Levy said.

These students receive standard education in the Naval Academy Preparatory School for one year and then reenter the United States Naval Academy (USNA) for a four-year education covering one of a variety of degrees including politics, economics, and engineering. After graduating from the USNA, graduates take part in a

minimum five years of service, although this can be longer based on post-graduate education.

While many students attend the USNA for their education, some future attendees are equally as excited to partake in military service.

“I really picked the Navy specifically because I think what their job is in the military is one of the most important. Patrolling the Seven Seas and being the tip of the spear when it comes to American foreign policy and showing the strength and [showing] what America is all about [is important],” senior Michael Kuhner said.

As some students look to serve at sea, others aspire to pursue different forms of specialized study. Students can enroll in schools that concentrate on individual topics in a specific area, taking more relevant classes and having a potentially shorter college experience.

“The culinary program that I’m interested in is just to learn how to cook safely and to get a degree so that I can seem more reputable to others ... I will get my associate’s degree in culinary and then I’m working on my associate’s degree in business,” junior Aura Riegel said.

Students can also attend trade schools, which place a similar emphasis on a specialized experience. These schools focus on specific trades, including electrical, mechanical, and criminal justice studies. Additionally, trade schools can provide employment and steady income for attendees.

“I want to go to school for welding ... because I get to work with my hands. It’s not like a desk job ... and it makes pretty good money” junior Ryan Coyle said.

Another student attending a trade school is senior Rylyn Groves, who plans to first take a gap year where she’ll gain work experience from Berkeley Repertory Theater or at Walnut Creek’s Lesher Center of the Arts. After taking a gap year, Groves plans on going to trade school for an associates degree in technical theater.

“I don’t love my worth being associated with a grade, so [college] will not be for me ... Theater is my life. It’s all I do. I eat, sleep, and breathe in the theater and I don’t really feel the need for a history class that requires all kinds of extra stuff,” Groves said.

Some future graduates may focus on employment directly after high school. In some cases, this can be in the form of online marketing in sales, specifically through social media or online brands.

“Clothes to me have always been such a good way for me to express my identity and who I am, and so I started to share that on social media ... Once I started getting brands reaching out and an influx of followers, that’s when I definitely started taking it more seriously,” senior Coy Meyer said.

According to the Nashville Film Institute, anyone with 10,000 to 50,000 followers can make 40,000 to 100,000 dollars a year through a variety of methods, including sponsored content, donations or subscriptions, and merchandise sales. Meyer has two accounts on TikTok, with 888.5 thousand followers and 47.2 million likes on her most popular profile.

With her large social media presence, Meyer hopes to share her experience and further build out an entrepreneurial business with fashion merchandise, as well as take up business in public relations.

“I’ve had my own experiences throughout my life that I would love to be able to share to other people ... especially when you have the opportunity to use your platform to do it ... I’m hoping to work with a [public relations] team and start to make my own merchandise, and I’m hoping to eventually get away more from the social media aspect, but turn [social media] into a fashion thing,” Meyer said.

Looking for employment or self-employment coming out of high school can have its advantages over spending more years in school. Not going to a four-year college can be a cheaper option for students and their families and may represent an opportunity to take on a greater level of responsibility for some students.



Blueprint Graphic/Maia Upp

"I'd like to learn how to be an adult, versus going into school not really knowing what's going on [in school]. I'm gonna have to start paying rent. I'm already paying car bills versus all of my friends that are just going right back into school. It's just different," Groves said.

However, the choice to turn to non-educational pathways can make entering the world of education at a later point more challenging, as graduates lose the support of their high school when applying for college.

"If you take time away for a year or two and travel or work or relax, you have to be a little bit more active in terms of calling your high school and getting your transcripts sent and trying to figure out if you can still reach a teacher for a recommendation ... You have to do that a little more independently because you don't have access to the tools of Naviance," Levy said.

Some students experience a level of judgment or concern from those around them if they choose to turn away from the four-year pathway.

"I was really scared when I started getting calls from counselors ... I said, 'college isn't for me.' I was really scared to say that, and they were completely on my side, which was awesome. Parents, less accepting. Not just mine, other parents in the community. They hear that I'm not going to college, and it's kind of shocking," Groves said.

According to some seniors, the source of this

shock stems from Acalanes' lack of acknowledgement of such options.

"I do wish the school would push other options instead of college. When I was getting the presentation at the beginning of the year ... trade school and gap years and no college weren't really an option. It was just all college, which was really interesting," Groves said.

As a result of the parental role in planning and paying for college, students can have trouble convincing their parents to support their alternative plans.

"I think a lot of parents are guiding their kids based upon 'what's the best fit for my kid, what's going to help them obtain good opportunities that work for them?' ... I think a lot of parents are also going to be looking at what schools are the most prestigious and will seem more impressive," Acalanes parent Jeffrey Acuff said.

Additionally, students' post-high school choices can change parents' college send-off plans.

"[My parents] have a very interesting dynamic with other parents now. Not necessarily negative, just new because they're not [a part of], 'Oh, my kid's getting ready. They're getting their dorm ready, we're buying stuff.' They're not really going to be a part of that," Groves said.

With pathways aside from the four-year college route, many students can feel less financially secure. Regardless, students emphasize the joy in

many athletics.

"I know for sports, when we have to bring team snacks and stuff, Noah's Bagels [is the] first thing every person on the team gets. [It's the] first thing we ask for," frosh Lucy O'Brien said. "I would say it's kind of a tradition. It's like, 'oh, well, everyone likes it. We've been doing this for years. We'll just keep on doing it.'"

Bagels come in a wide variety of flavors and can be bought in bulk, making it a popular food to bring before games.

"There are times when coaches come bring bagels to practice. They order just a bunch of bagels. Moms do it too. Moms be like, 'oh, my kid's playing football. Let me buy like 3000 bagels' ... It's easy to divide. You don't have to actually have all the forks and everything to eat. It's hand food. It's easy to eat," Williams said.

Noah's Bagels are also popular amongst the Acalanes sports community because student-athletes can also consume them quickly before games.

"Typically, I would bring maybe a few dozen bagels with various cream cheeses [for football games] ... It was just something that's just fast and easy. [The athletes] seemed to like those and [they could] get some carbohydrates in them,

doing what they enjoy.

"When you're not following with that four-year [plan], it feels like you're falling behind ... [but] instead of panicking, it's again focused on what makes me happy, and I know that spending more time competing with other people is not going to make me more happy," Meyer said.

Additionally, many think of the college experience as a rite of passage into adulthood and that taking an alternative pathway can impact that experience.

"I think it's a really big confidence issue where if you're not doing that four-year or you get into a college that isn't as cool as the UCs [University of Californias], you're looked down on. It can be different forms with classism ... I know students who can't afford college at all, and [they] feel really horrible about it because it feels like they're missing out on experiences," Meyer said.

Ultimately, students find excitement in being able to pursue their own paths and continue doing what they love after high school.

"I think that my parents are a little bit disappointed that I'm not going to a traditional four-year because that's just kind of the trend and what people think is like the right thing to do, but I just know in the long run, I'll be happier ... I think that my parents honestly just want me to push myself to do my best, but I think that they're also just happy if I'm happy," Riegel said.

and that's what they liked," varsity football team parent Natalie Souza said.

Although some may think of Noah's Bagels as just a snack, for many student-athletes, it has become a key aspect of their high school careers.

"I think [traditions are] something that just comes with the program that you're involved with. I'll definitely miss the programs in general, but the bondings, the pasta, the bagels, just the small things, are what really made my high school sporting career," varsity football and soccer player and senior Rhett Skvarna said.

From Noah's Bagels' beginnings as a cultural gathering place and friendly neighborhood feel in Berkeley to its prominence in Acalanes athletic events, early morning breakfast runs, or trips to downtown Lafayette, the store ultimately acts as a unifying force for a vast array of communities.

"[Noah's Bagels] was certainly a uniting factor for the Jewish community, many of whom were not religious, but this was sort of their synagogue, if you will, to come and see and be seen," Alper said. "But amongst the large community as well, it was a neighborhood gathering place that brought people together for sure. That was important to us."

Noah's Bagels

Continued from 15

too many take-out breakfast places that are moderately healthy," junior Catherine Judson said. "[Noah's Bagels are] just fresh and chewy and delicious. They do make their bagels pretty fresh, so they're always good to eat because things that have been sitting out don't taste as good as new things."

Noah's Bagels opens at five a.m. on weekdays, which is much earlier than other stores in the area such as Starbucks, making it a convenient spot for food before school.

"I see a lot of students often ... I see a lot of Acalanes students. There are a lot of Stanley students, especially in the mornings on Wednesday. [I think it's because the store is] open early, and apparently the bagels are really good," junior Amani Williams said. "It astounds me that people stand in lines for 30 minutes just to get a bagel. Sometimes the lines are so long and out the door and they'd be just standing there waiting for bagels."

Beyond being just a common place for students to get a quick meal, Noah's Bagels is also a prominent part of the Acalanes sports community, with the bagels now being a staple food for



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Quote of the Issue

"You do not have to be good. You do not have to walk on your knees for a hundred miles through the desert repenting. You only have to let the soft animal of your body love what it loves." - Excerpt from Mary Oliver's "Wild Geese"

Kayli Harley | Staff Writer

Humans are not strangers to movement. We live in a culture of toxic productivity, abiding by an arbitrary rule that if we stop moving, we stop progressing. We condition ourselves to walk on our knees and abuse our bodies. We believe this makes us human. I think it makes us suffer.

Our current definitions of productivity and success expect us to move forward at any cost, including at our own expense. But life is complicated, and sometimes all we can bring ourselves to do is sit still. That's okay. Growth requires patience.

We cannot function without rest and flexibility. We cannot persevere unless we meet ourselves where we are. Within the everyday chaos of our lives, we must create space for love and rest. We were never made to run until we collapse—we are only human.

For the longest time, I thought that if all else failed, I just had to keep putting one foot in front of the other. If I could continue taking one step at a time, I could get myself out of anything. To an extent, I still believe this is true. But different types of pain require different types of healing, and I am learning that healing isn't always about taking steps forward.

Sometimes, healing is motionless. We stop to catch our breaths. We stop to check in with ourselves. We stop to truly assess what it is that we need. In some cases, we stop because the idea of moving forward just feels wrong. Love can manifest itself in the act of holding on, and there will always be things that we can never let go of. We cannot punish ourselves for feeling love.

There is no proper way to feel or heal, so be kind to yourself. You do not have to be good. You just have to be.



Blueprint Graphic/Nastia Grits

Dear Quote of the Issue readers,

Thank you. It has been my honor to write this column for the last three years. In the darkest of times, words gave me light. I hope that no matter what comes next, you can find solace in them as well.

*With love,
Kayli*

Romeo and Juliet: A Dramatic Close to the Year

Rivalries, romance, and riveting sword fights come to life in the latest DramaDons production.

El Reid and Valentina Penati | News Copy Editor and Staff Writer

Two households, both alike in dignity,
/ in fair Lafayette where we lay our scene, / from ancient play break to new scrutiny, / for Romeo and Juliet's routine / was then the two hours traffic of the stage.

In vivid Verona, more commonly known as the Acalanes Little Theater, an array of colorful characters took to the stage to perform Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* during the last week of April.

The play, written during the Elizabethan era, tells the story of a short-lived romance between the children of two feuding noble households, the Capulets and the Montagues. The titular characters meet at a party, marry the following day, and die by the end of the week, causing their families to resolve their rivalry.

With school's end approaching, the production of the play took place over a similarly short time frame.

"It was pretty rushed because *Beauty and the Beast* ended this semester. So we had less than a semester to put it all together. [We had] somewhere in the realm of six weeks to get everything done," actor playing Paris and junior Catherine Kessler said.

Auditions began during the performance week of *Beauty and the Beast*, so the crew had no break between the two shows. The directors worked to cast students in parts that fit their personalities, but left each actor room to interpret the character in their own way.

"I based my version of Romeo heavily off the new Leonardo DiCaprio 90s version of him. I talked to my aunt a lot and she majored in acting...she views Romeo as this really emo and mopey guy, but also, I found that he's really manipulative," actor playing Romeo and senior Dagny Brand-



ford-Urban said. "As much as he thinks that he's in love...there is a heavy level of him [that] wants to be the power couple of Verona."

Actors who held smaller roles had fewer models for their characters. This allowed them more flexibility in their performance.

"I was given the role of Peter. Peter is an interesting character. Peter doesn't have many set-in-stone character traits as many of the characters in *Romeo and Juliet* do. I've also found that in some versions of the play *Romeo and Juliet*, Peter does not exist. The play has been done without him. This gives me a lot of room for creativity to develop who Peter is," actor playing Peter and sophomore Steph Boustoni said.

In addition to acting, many students got involved in the play by designing costumes. To help highlight the household's separation, the costume designers concentrated on the colors of the characters' various outfits.

"For the Capulets, which is Juliet, we do red and cream colors. For Romeo and Montagues we're doing green. The color scheme is really important, we put a lot of thought into that," costume designer and frosh Gianna Hoarau Feuerstein said. "I decided we should have a middle ground color, which was yellow. We incorporated that for everybody because *Romeo and Juliet* is about how these two households hated

each other, but in the end they realized they were actually alike. They had to overcome that and that's what the story is truly about."

The crew either rented costumes from a local costume shop or acquired outfits from Drama's costume room. However, students Makenna Arase and Ezryn Zupo made the masquerade masks that the characters wear at Lord Capulet's party. The masks were designed by Feuerstein to fit the time period.

"In that style and era they would cut the masks really high to make it look like you had small cheekbones and really big foreheads," Feuerstein said. "That's what I was going for when I sketched them, and the people who made the masks did amazing."

In addition to costumes, the lighting of the show plays a key role in telling the classic story. With the help of other members of the production staff, technical director and senior Rylyn Groves programmed the lights and cues for the performance. Utilizing different colors and orienting the lights in varied locations around the set helped the staff enhance the events of the story.

"There's what we call footlighting, it's literally what it sounds like, the lights are down by your feet angled upwards so it makes really cool shadows on your fac-

es and you can separate color from the front and the back," Groves said. "It also helps clarify things. The stage goes completely red in [the] instant [characters] get stabbed, so it's very clear that they are dead."

Another unusual aspect of the performance was the music. Cast member George Rogers composed the music, which featured piano, cello, drums, and saxophone.

"We kept [the play] as original as we could...but the music is contemporary jazz, which isn't really done that often, and the actors are really energetic and the lighting is really crazy...we try to use everybody's strengths to their advantage," Student Director and senior Clea Hansen said.

Romeo and Juliet has been performed thousands of times since it was written, so many past directors have reimagined major parts of the play, such as the time period or location. In the Acalanes production, the directors decided to shorten the script.

"We cut it pretty hard, I think we cut about 45 percent of the language. It's still a two hour play with an intermission, but we cut much of it for understanding. Our audience really appreciates it being a little bit shorter and not quite so long," Director, Producer, and Drama teacher Ed Meehan said.

The directors and mentors mostly shortened lines and removed unnecessary scenes, resulting in some altered plot points.

"We do have some character deaths cut for time. For one, Lady Montague, who's played by Lily Thomas, originally dies if you read the full length version, but we had to cut that portion from the show so she's still alive at the end, as is Paris, another character," actor playing Montague and sophomore Lux Downing Griggs said.

Despite having less to memorize, actors found the complicated text difficult to understand. Between the unique sentence structure, older form of English, and complex vocabulary, it can take a longer time for actors to learn their lines and what they mean.

"You have to know what you're saying before you can memorize it, because if I didn't know what any of my lines meant, I could be saying them completely wrong," actor playing Lady Capulet and senior Paige Towery said.

The actors had more time to analyze and interpret their lines than many unfamiliar

audience members, who might struggle with the rhythm of the language.

"Most people can't understand Shakespearean text when spoken aloud. They probably need to have read the play in order to grasp the themes. That said, the performances can be entertaining and folks can enjoy the spectacle, props, costumes, staging, sword fights, [and] kisses, without really understanding the depth," English teacher Erik Honda said.

Taught in most frosh English classes, many students have read or have tried to read *Romeo and Juliet* at some point. Some find their previous knowledge helpful in appreciating the performance.

"I think studying it in English and going through it in English really helps you understand what they're actually saying, so it doesn't sound like gibberish," frosh Sparrow Springfield said.

Despite difficulties with the language and the shorter time frame, many of the people involved in the play felt that it turned out

nicely. Running for four nights in a row, the cast and crew had no major problems or setbacks.

"This is probably the best production I've ever worked on. I've never seen a production come together so quickly and so beautifully," Groves said.

As the last show of the school year, *Romeo and Juliet* was many seniors' final Acalanes production. Eight members of the cast, including the lead couple, the student set designer, technical director, and student director will all be graduating at the end of May.

"Every single production, no matter what my role has been, has been so incredibly thrilling and exciting and wonderful," Bradford-Urban said. "Getting to show the community our hard work has been super rewarding. Having that come to a close, and having to say goodbye to all my drama friends is just going to be very, very sad, but also I'm grateful for the time I've had with them."



Blueprint Photo/Arlyne Noguera

The Gilded Age is all the Rage

Met Gala's Gilded Age theme sparks controversy among community members

Gus McKinney and Miles Thomas | Podcast and Video Content Manager and Staff Writer

The Met Gala is an annual fundraising event held on the first Monday in May at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. Known for its outlandish themes, celebrities representing various circles in the fashion industry attend in clothes that consistently push the boundaries of fashion. Icons like Billie Eilish, Hailey Bieber, Megan Thee Stallion, and Kendall Jenner are just some of the icons that walked the red carpet at this year's event. These figures have a tremendous impact on the fashion industry as well as their audience.

This year's gala's theme was "gilded glamour." This theme was a reference to the Gilded Age, specifically in New York, spanning from 1870 to 1890. It was a time of cultural advancements, beautiful architecture, and

the ever-growing wealth gap between rich and poor.

Every year, celebrities travel from far and wide to Manhattan to show off their outfits by America's top designers. These outlandish styles and risky fashion choices are always subject to the public's judgment. Days after the gala, social media explodes with opinions about what outfits "hit" or "missed" that year.

This year, Blake Lively had a wildly popular outfit from Versace. The dress started as rose gold with matching gloves. As Lively walked the carpet, attendants unwrapped her dress to reveal a stunning turquoise gown beneath.

"My favorite outfit was Blake Lively's ode to the Statue of Liberty. The transition from bronze to green perfectly represented the aging of lady liberty and tied in to the gilded glamor theme," sophomore Emily Jones said.

While some celebrities like Lively were positively received, not everyone was as lucky. NBA player Russell Westbrook is known to be outgoing with his fashion, yet for many, his top hat, a black skirt, and a black blazer missed the mark.

"I didn't really like [Westbrook's] outfit

to be honest. I know he is really passionate about his fashion and is always making a statement with the way he dresses, but I didn't like what he wore," sophomore Brady Morrow said.

The theme of the Met Gala is always the heart of the outfits worn. Recent themes have included futuristic, imagination, fashion history, savage beauty, and many more. This year's theme was titled gilded glamor, but not enough celebrities committed to the theme as Acalanes students would have liked.

"I actually liked the theme, but I don't think it was executed well at all. The theme had a lot of potential, but no one really went all out," sophomore Chloe Lockwood said. "A lot of the looks this year were giving "old hollywood" like Kim in Marilyn Monroe's dress. That was iconic, don't get me wrong, but it wasn't on theme. The Met Gala is meant to be extravagant but no one was really giving it their all this year."

Many students felt that the effort to fit the theme was disregarded by the celebrities. This upset many students, who felt that the theme is often tossed aside for 'generic' fashion.

"I think the theme was widely misinterpreted. There were very few, if any outfits that actually displayed the style of gilded glamor. I think as the years go on less and less Met Gala attendees go full out and dress for the theme and the outfits get tamer and more simple every year," Jones said.

To many students, the theme is more important than the outfits themselves. With an underwhelming execution, students were upset with the gala itself.

"I think [The Gala] is very hit or miss. The Gala is only as good as the theme and how it's executed," Lockwood said.

On the contrary, some just enjoy the fact that an event to showcase fashion exists. Community members state bringing light to fashion and making it into a public event makes fashion more fun and palatable for all.

"It's always fun. It's always fun to see. It's always well regarded and everyone's always excited to see it and so I enjoy it too. I like fashion. It's an applied art that interests a lot of people. It's an event that I look forward to watching," Porter said.



Blueprint Graphic/Nastia Grits

Recipe of the Issue

Fruit-infused lemon popsicles

Aysha Craig and Shrida Pandey | Staff Writers

With the school year coming to end and summer peeking right around the corner, popsicles are the ultimate refreshing treat to enjoy as you bask in the sun or take a dip in the pool. These fruit-infused lemon popsicles are the perfect way to quench your thirst under the summer sun.

Ingredients: (yields 6 popsicles)

- 1 cup desired fruit (raspberries, strawberries, lemon)
- 1 cup fresh lemon juice
- 1 ½ cups water
- Popsicle molds or paper cups
- Wooden popsicle sticks

Directions:

1. Strain 1 cup of fresh lemon juice
 2. Pour 1/6 of lemon juice in each slot of the popsicle mold
 3. If you do not have popsicle molds, you can alternate with a cup and a popsicle stick
 4. Add 1 cup of desired fruit to the molds
 5. Fill the rest of the popsicle molds with water
 6. Freeze the popsicles for at least 5 hours

Pull the frozen popsicles out of the molds and enjoy!



Blueprint Photo/Aysha Craig and Shrida Pandey

Recommended flavor combinations:

Lemon & fruit -

Lemon base with raspberries and strawberries

Lemon & mint -

Lemon base with thin, circular lemon slices and mint leaves

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Artists of the Issue

Getting to know artists

Michelle Goll, George Rogers, David DePaepe, and Victoria Flint

Nastia Grits | Head Cartoonist



Courtesy Graphic/Michelle Goll

Michelle Goll

An outline of a teacup slowly forms as senior Michelle Goll creates the final intricate lines on her piece: a painting of a delicate china set lined with dainty flowers.

Goll has been highly passionate about art since her frosh year. She regularly employs mediums such as acrylic and charcoal and occasionally experiments with watercolor and graphite. In her pieces, she explores a variety of different genres.

"It has only been four years of me taking art...I feel like I am kind of still figuring things out and trying things. I don't think any of my pieces are super similar, they have a realistic style and a little bit painterly, but other than that I think they are diverse," Goll said.

Multiple factors contributed to Goll's fascination with art, from her sister's interest in the subject to her decision to try out new hobbies frosh year.

"I have a sister who minored in art, so I knew that it was something that I could be good at. Also, freshman year, I was trying a lot of dif-

ferent things, and that was one of the things that I ended up trying. When it really clicked for me freshman year – which I honestly owe all to Mr. Porter, he is an amazing teacher – I was like 'Oh, this is something I can put time into and really enjoy,'" Goll said.

Currently, she is concentrating on her AP Art prompt, which displays the beauty of butterflies and moths in new and creative ways.

"I feel like you see butterflies in fashion and culture, and they have kind of become a dry, bland topic just because they are really overused, so I wanted to paint them in new ways that brought some interest back into them...not going based off of something that already exists, [instead] finding something in your head that is unique, a perspective new take on it," Goll said.

Over the years, as Goll has advanced in her art techniques, she has continuously refined her work.

"Michelle has been with me for four years, and it is bittersweet to see her graduate. She has come a very long way, but she is super talented and has always been since she was a freshman. Her work is more mature and her skills have improved drastically over the four years...I hope she continues art," Art teacher Robert Porter said.

After taking a gap year, Goll is considering minoring in art in college, as well as continuing to pursue art individually.

"I want to keep it a hobby and something that I enjoy; I don't want it to become work...I plan on minoring in it and have it be something that I do on my own time, and maybe sell, but on the side and just for enjoyment," Goll said.



Courtesy Photo/George Rogers

George Rogers

The lights dim as senior George Rogers steps on stage to a packed theater. After tuning his saxophone, he begins playing a melody consisting of complex riffs and refined notes, sparking delight in his listeners.

Since the fifth grade, Rogers has played jazz on the saxophone. Along with participating in the Acalanes Band for all four years of high school, he has played for ensembles in the California Jazz Conservatory, the San Francisco Jazz High School Allstars, and the California All-State Jazz Band. His joy for music stems from several factors, all of which inspire him to play.

"I like [music] because it is fun and it just brings me a lot of joy. I just think it covers a spectrum of emotions that can otherwise feel very vast. I think sometimes it is very easy to feel a certain way and not know what that feeling is, but you can always find it in music," Rogers said.

Rogers has a distinguished presence in the Acalanes band, not only due to his musical talent but also because of his enthusiasm and leadership capabilities.

"He is super talented and he puts in work, he practices constantly and you can just see his love of music...He is consistently leading—he leads our pep bands and he has led rehearsals before—and because of his kindness and inclusive attitude, everybody responds to his leadership really well because they know he is a good musician and a good leader at the same time. He has just been an incredible student to have," band teacher Lauren Gibson said.

Aside from the saxophone, Rogers also plays the piano and uses online software to create complex melodies, typically in a contemporary and experimental style. To create audio tracks, Rogers often uses the app *Logic*, which expands his ability to create unique sounds.

"It allows me to record multiple instruments, sample other audio files, and take many creative liberties that I am not able to take while playing music in a live performance setting," Rogers said.

Rogers has also been writing sheet music for years, sometimes bringing original songs to a practice to play with his friends for fun. Recently, Rogers has developed a passion for songwriting, which combines a newfound interest in journaling with his

love for music.

"I write about any normal thing that people write songs about, different struggles and victories of life, but it has been a fairly recent thing that I have gotten into. It is very rewarding because lyricism is something that I have underappreciated for a long time, and as I have experimented with writing lyrics of my own I have found it really gratifying," Rogers said.

Rogers will continue to pursue music post-graduation at the Overland College and Conservatory in Ohio by double majoring in Psychology and Jazz Saxophone performance. While he seeks musical success beyond high school, the Acalanes community will miss hearing his fantastical concerts.



Courtesy Graphic/David DePaepe

David DePaepe

Junior David DePaepe has been creating art for around six years. He uses acrylic and watercolor to create his pieces, often in a surrealistic style, characterized by juxtapositions, symbolism, and a dreamlike appearance. He often finds artistic inspiration in various areas such as nature, music, and his surroundings.

DePaepe plans to advance his abilities even further with rigorous classes over the summer.

"He is at a point where he is gaining a lot of skill and facility with what he is doing, and I am really excited to see where he takes that to the next level. I think he is taking a course over the summer at CSSA which is a very intensive art program in Southern California Otis, and I hope that his work over the summer catapults him

into the next year where I am expecting him to do really great things," Porter said.

DePaepe transferred his love of art to fashion over quarantine. His clothing designs include a variety of pieces such as shirts, pants, and jackets which he sews either by hand or with a machine. Additionally, DePaepe has taken a special interest in baggy or embroidered jeans. He often takes inspiration from vintage clothes, the sixties and seventies, and rave wear.

"I just take any fabric I can find, old clothing or new, in stores, and create designs that I like and then mess around with making clothing," DePaepe said. "[Fashion] connected with me over quarantine. I liked the style of art because I was really big into art and I always have been big into art, so I just put the two together and got into fashion."

DePaepe wishes to continue spending his time doing art and fashion, whether it is through starting a business or solely as a hobby.

"I definitely want to pursue art, and with that maybe start a clothing brand and go into fashion. I want to mix both together because I love both things," DePaepe said.



Blueprint Photo/Arlyne Noguera

Victoria Flint

It is the opening night of the DramaDons' production of Shakespeare's famous play, *Romeo and Juliet*. Two characters in a blood feud draw their swords onstage, while a pair of star-crossed lovers yearn to be together. In the center of it all is Juliet Capulet, played by senior Victoria Flint.

Flint has been active in musical theater productions every year since the second grade, including multiple school musicals at Acalanes. However, the Dramadons' 2022 performance of *Romeo and Juliet* was her first play, which she took special pride in.

"I really resonate with [Juliet] because she's just pissed at her parents and she just wants to have fun and do what she wants to do,"

Flint said. "I [also] think it is really cool to be able to see perspectives of other people and play characters that I normally would not really act like. Babette [in *Beauty and the Beast*] was a bit of a stretch for me because she was very flirtatious and out there, so it was very fun to play around with that."

Flint's *Romeo and Juliet* castmates enjoyed many aspects of working with her, seeing her as a valuable addition to the cast.

"Vic is a phenomenal actress. Not only does she work really hard, but she's a really positive presence backstage and super fun to be around. She's really good at putting a lot of emotion behind her lines and making her character feel real, as well as interacting well with the other actors onstage," junior Matthew Colvin said.

Along with acting, Flint is exceedingly passionate about singing. Along with participating in the Acalanes choir, she is one of the leaders of the school's Octet acapella group, which she has participated in since frosh year.

"I have been in choir since third grade... I auditioned for Acapella on a whim. I actually sang the Grace VanderWaal song, 'I Don't Know My Name'. Since then it has been something that I have been really passionate about. I went from being new to [Acapella] freshman year to leading it this year," Flint said.

Along with singing and acting, Flint enjoys dance. She assisted with choreography in Acalanes' productions of *Cinderella* her frosh year and *Urinetown* her sophomore year. Most recently, she produced and choreographed *Beauty and the Beast*. Although she no longer goes to a dance studio, she periodically takes dance classes.

"I grew up doing mostly ballet, and then I was on pointe as well but then I quit because it was a lot of commitment and I just didn't really want to take that direction with my life. I also did a little bit of tap and a lot of hip-hop," Flint said.

After graduating, Flint hopes to pursue production and continue her involvement in plays.

"I am not really sure what I am majoring in just yet... I think that I want to go into producing or maybe directing either plays, musicals, or movies... I am pretty good at making things happen and getting things done. I have a lot of background in performing, dance, and putting on a show, and not only know how to do all the background stuff, but I know what the actors need," Flint said.

Exploring Representation in Bridgerton

Bridgerton brings representation, but is it the right kind?

Shrida Pandey | Staff Writer

Colorful ball gowns spin in circles. Expensive-looking jewels shine under the ballroom light. Classical string music plays in the background as an elaborate love story unfolds on the dancefloor. While centuries ago, the ballroom would have held only white people, this one has a diverse array of dancers and attendees. With the rise in popularity of its second season in April, the Regency-era romance *Bridgerton*, one of Netflix's most popular shows, continues to push the boundaries of race and ethnicity in period pieces.

Bridgerton's color-conscious casting process is important because it helps push the boundaries of representation. However, the show needs to do more to make sure there is an accurate portrayal of the time period.

Usually, historical dramas only have white casts, reflecting people of color's minuscule role in society during that time period. Some barely even touch on their struggles at all. However, *Bridgerton* aims to erase that and truly bring people of color to the forefront of historical dramas.

Bridgerton is set in the regency era, but their color-conscious casting process allows people of all races to take part in the production, and not just in the background. The show's two main love interests, Regé-Jean Page and Simone Ashley, are people of color. Page, who is Black, and Ashley, who is Indian, are also given moments where they examine their culture and the society around them as people of color.

This representation has its positives and negatives. For one, it brings better representation to television, which is always needed, and also allows people of color to be main characters.



However, it also erases all of the struggles people of color faced in the Regency time period. The British empire oppressed Black people and colonized India during this time. *Bridgerton* does not address this, but rather pushes it under the rug.

If anything, the show pushes the offensive notion that love can defeat discrimination and racial tensions. In one scene between Lady Danbury, a woman of color, and Page's character the Duke of Hastings, Lady Danbury states how the King married one of "them" and therefore solved the problem of racism in society. This is widely inaccurate with the historical time period and modern times. Saying that love can stop racism, completely erases the struggles people of color have faced throughout history and the present day.

Additionally, Ashley's character, Kathani Sharma, never touches on how the British actually colonized India. The show does introduce aspects of Indian culture, with a traditional pre-wedding ceremony and talk of Indian tea, however, it does not actually mention the main thing Britain was doing in India at that time: taking all

Blueprint Graphic/Nastia Grits

their resources.

Beyond this, the show still centers around two white families: the Bridgertons and the Featheringtons. While nothing is wrong with this, it brings up the fact that people of color can only be found in certain side roles in order to win "diversity points", but will never be the actual main ensemble. If anything, white savior complex (an overused trope, where a white person saves a person of color out of the goodness of their heart) by the main characters can be seen throughout the first and second season.

I am not saying that *Bridgerton* should revert to having only a white cast. I want diversity in shows and movies and *Bridgerton* does an excellent job representing all types of ethnicities and races.

That said, it needs to be accurate and not brush over the atrocities committed by the British during the time period. If *Bridgerton* recognized what happened to people of color during the 1800s, how Black people were slaves, and Indian people were facing the brutality of colonization, I would have enjoyed the show more.

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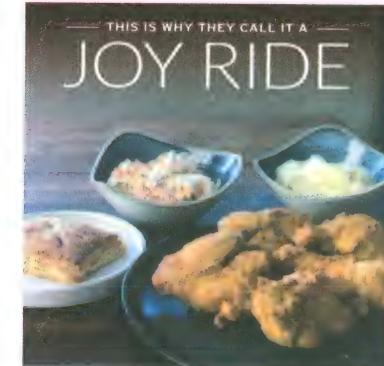
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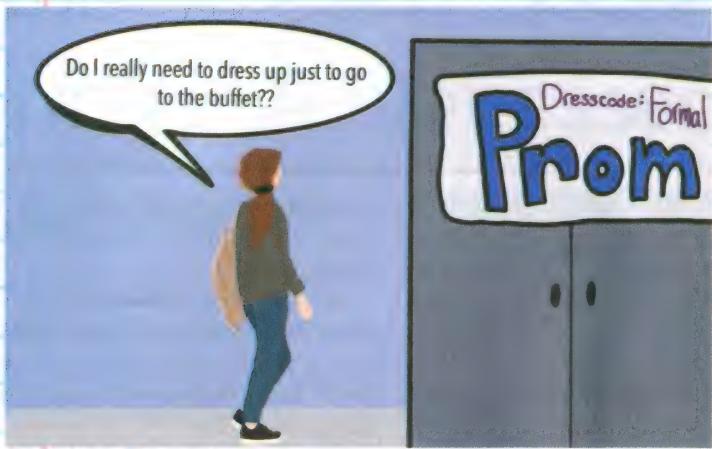
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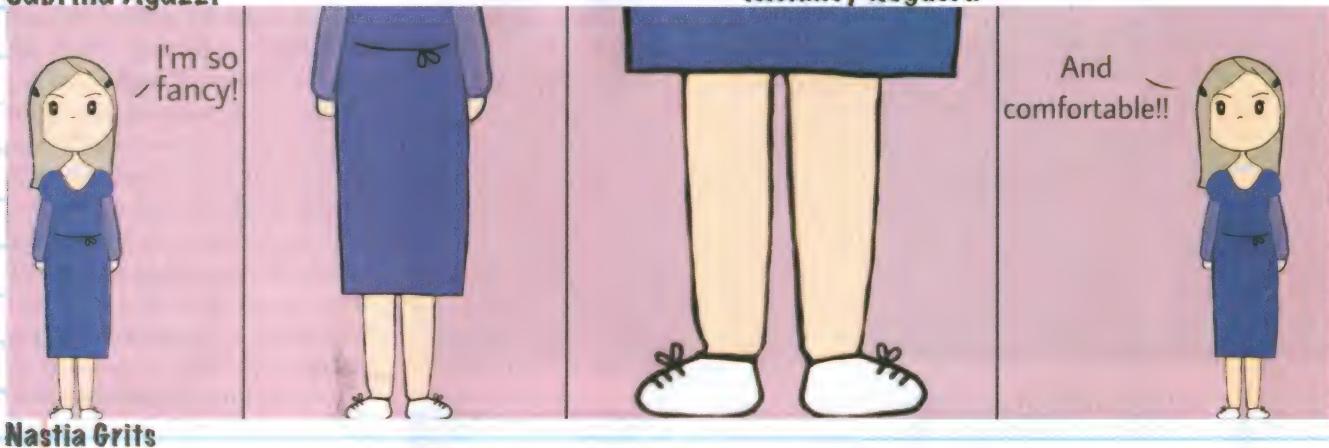
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Sabrina Agazzi



Melaney Noguera



Nastia Grits



Mara Korzeniowska



Freschetta Warres



Maia Upp



Arlyne Noguera

The Small Actions that Help Communities Grow

Remembering what unites us all beneath royal blue and the letter 'A'

Melina Nath | Print News Editor

I remember the first time I came onto the Acalanes campus as a student. I was picking up a copy of *To Kill a Mockingbird* for my freshman English class, a space that I would not step into for months.

I walked with a map of the school on my phone, accompanied only by the echoing of my footsteps. Once I arrived at the library, I was met not by a person, but a single book cart in the hallway. I searched for my teacher's name, picked up my book, and left the school without seeing anyone.

Around Lafayette, I saw the royal blue signs decorated with the 'A' emblem, constantly reminding me that 'Community Can't Be Canceled.' I received five Acalanes High School t-shirts in remembrance of each time I visited the campus. I went back on campus every few months to pick up a new book. This was the extent of my interaction with the Acalanes community during my freshman year.

I spent the majority of that year isolated, staring at my bedroom walls, thinking about anything else except the lesson playing in the background. When I scrolled through the Zoom boxes on my computer, the classmates I once knew did not even seem like real people.

I didn't realize the value in community until it disappeared. I sat in my room each day, suspended in time. I don't remember much from that year, but I do remember

needing someone to talk to. No one was there but the small, robotic figures on the screen.

We talk about community so much at our school. But how do we truly build a strong community? This is a question I didn't know the answer to until the end of this school year.

Coming into my sophomore year, I always thought the answer to building back the unity lost through years of isolation was the return of traditional high school events, such as tailgates before sports games, rallies, and dances. However, as the football season ended and the homecoming dance passed me by, I remember thinking: I've been to a football game. I've been to homecoming. I've attended all of these events with people I barely knew. Why did I still not feel like part of the community?

Then, I started to ask myself: Can these events truly create community? Or, can they only celebrate what's already in place?

These large gestures only exposed me to the surface of what a community is. As I continue to navigate the community I find myself in today, I strongly believe that a group of people can only be superficially bonded by royal blue and a catch phrase. A true community is not built through large gestures; it's built through the small ones.

I hope that people know how much it means to simply ask how someone is doing. I remember each time one of my friends texts me "How are you?". I remember those few phone calls where people didn't ask me for a favor, and I remember the shock I felt when they just asked how my day went.

I think of each time one of my former water polo teammates said hi to me in the hallways. Sometimes it was simply a smile or a wave. Even if it was just a split second in a full 24 hours, I always thought it was the coolest thing when upperclassmen



Small actions build community

Blueprint Cartoon/Nastia Grits

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National Park System Lotteries and Permits: A Necessary Nuisance

Why recently implemented quota systems are essential to preserving nature for everyone

Emerson Brown | Staff Writer

Standing on the summit of Half Dome in Yosemite, it was not the sheer granite faces and expansive valley that astonished me, but instead the fact that I had gotten a permit to hike in the first place. After five years of applying and spending well over a hundred dollars on application fees, my dad and I had finally hiked one of the most recognizable landscapes in the world. But why did it take so long?

While my story is particularly disheartening (there was a 0.6 percent chance of not winning the lottery for five years straight, but I was just that unlucky), it sheds light on the elusiveness of the National Park Service's (NPS) permit systems. While annoying, these permit systems are essential to protect visitors and preserve fragile ecosystems.

Half Dome in Yosemite National Park was one of the first hikes to receive a permit system in the 2010 season. Looking at the cables on the backside of Half Dome it is clear why a permit system is necessary; situated on a 45 degree slope of granite, only metal poles, worn cables, and shaky wood planks keep hikers from falling 3,000 feet to their death. Because the poles have to be threaded through the anchored cables every year, it is only feasible to hike when Yosemite rangers have the poles up May through October every year. Hikers must hike in a single file line, stopping to let people going in the opposite direction pass.

From 2005 to 2015, 12 people slipped off of the cable section and died. Since 2015, after the implementation of the permit system, only two have. The limited number of hikers on the cable section reduces crowding, thus lowering the risk. About 300 hikers receive permits each day, a massive drop from the weekend highs of 1,200 hikers a day before



the permit system.

An unintended benefit of the permit system is the extensive planning it requires. The pre-season lottery for Half Dome forces people to apply for permits for their preferred summer dates months in advance. The only walk-in permits are the ones left over from pre-season cancellations; no permits are specifically set aside for daily lotteries.

Almost all deaths in national parks come from being underprepared, and the degree of preparation required for Half Dome means that only the most dedicated hikers will have access to the hike. The lower, unpermitted section of the trail to Half Dome, the Mist Trail, is a strenuous hike in and of itself, including over 2,000 feet of elevation gain in a mere three miles. However, I saw hikers in improper shoes with one plastic water bottle, already sunburnt halfway up. These people, if attempting to reach Half Dome, are more likely to take away vital search and rescue resources or pollute the natural ecosystem with their lack of preparation and knowledge. Everyone should spend time outside and attempt difficult things, but must do so in a responsible manner.

Another type of permit is a backpacking or overnight wilderness camping permit. Many

Blueprint Graphic/Liam McGlynn

outdoor recreation areas have implemented these permits in response to overuse of the area. People's environmental abuses such as over-gathering firewood, improper interaction with animals, trampling of native grasses, and depleting natural water sources all degrade the environment. Even with proper education and action, these effects must also be mitigated by limiting human impact all together.

In addition, rangers check permits at a specified location. This stop allows rangers to debrief hikers on local regulations and educate on Leave No Trace ethics, vital information to protect the sensitive ecosystems these hikes go through.

While most systems have caps on how many permits they issue, other types of permits do not, and authorities use them to track wilderness usage. Yosemite is a world-renowned climbing destination; with granite cliffs and short boulders, the Valley has been a pilgrimage for all serious outdoor climbers since modern climbing first began, and has only received more attention with recent movies

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No, Corporations Can't Be Woke

Major companies use progressive values to promote themselves

Asher Meklin | Head Copy Editor

The phrase 'Woke Disney' blares out on Florida televisions as Governor Ron DeSantis discusses the corporation's recent pullout from donating to his and other conservative politicians' campaigns. Viewers at home might wonder as to the intentions of the statement or as to how a company can be woke in the first place.

In recent years, major corporations have used progressive values in order to help their brand image. The question arises, however, of whether these corporations can truly live up to the progressive or woke values they claim to uphold.

The term 'woke' refers to the state of being culturally conscious of the world around you and the socioeconomic realities of the modern world. First put into use in the 1960s through the use of African American Vernacular English in order to mean informed or aware, the word has spiraled into popularity in recent years through the advent of social media.

As more and more segments of the population become aware of the term and the progressive politics frequently associated with it, the corporate world has responded through its own attempt to engage in woke policies. Whether it is a Chase Bank-sponsored float at a Pride parade or a Black Lives Matter post on an Instagram page, corporations have recently taken to endorsing particular political stances through proclamations of support or pledges to do better.

The largest and most recent example of a major company claiming support for a given progressive cause has been the Walt Disney Corporation pulling donations from various Florida politicians who endorsed the controversial HB-1557, nicknamed the 'Don't Say Gay' bill, which prevents Florida teachers and educators from informing their students

of LGBT-related topics in early primary school, and allows for private citizens to sue teachers accused of breaking this law.

The law also stipulates that LGBT-related topics will be discussed in middle or high school and must be 'age appropriate', raising the question of what can be considered 'age appropriate' by the state of Florida.

In late March, Disney pulled funding that it had previously donated to Florida politicians, including Representative Joe Harding and State Senator Dennis Baxley, the Republican co-sponsors of the bill. Disney had been funding these politicians, among others, in order to protect its self-governing status of the Disney World amusement park located in Orlando.

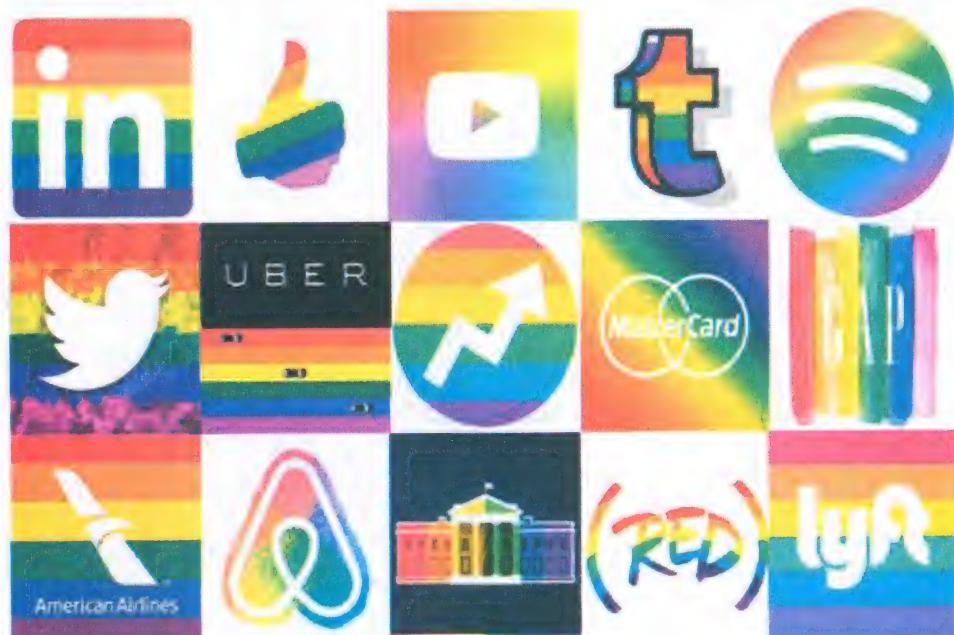
Amidst a wave of backlash from all ends of the political aisle, with liberals dismissing it as too little, too late and conservatives criticizing the move to pull funding as a whole, Disney was backed into a metaphorical corner as it became the center of national attention.

Despite Disney's withdrawal of funds in a move that aimed to protect its political reputation, critics debated the legitimacy and intentions of the mega-corporation's political efforts.

Given the fact that Disney has had a mixed history in regards to LGBT representation in the past, with over a dozen characters labeled as 'Disney's first gay character(s)' appearing in their media despite receiving little screentime, Disney's practice of political funding and withdrawal of those funds is part of a broader picture of the company's attempts to appeal to both sides of the political aisle.

By appearing to be woke through its gay characters while simultaneously giving them less screentime when compared to their straight counterparts and by giving and revoking funds to certain politicians based on their views on or legislation in regards to LGBT issues, Disney is attempting to secure its position as a favored children's film producer with both sides of the political aisle. This dual-sided activism can lead to public relations disasters, such as the one surrounding HB-1557.

However, Disney is not the only corporation teetering on this line. In recent years, a multitude of massive corporations have attempted to use progressively-minded language or terminology in order to market their products or attract employees, with issues that span from racial justice to



Courtesy Graphics/Medium

maternity leave.

One company in particular, Amazon, frequently advertises itself as 'Earth's Safest Place to Work' on the section on its website dedicated to employee relations. This slogan, however, does not hold; in recent months there have been several incidents that directly contradict this mantra.

In December 2021, an Amazon warehouse in Illinois was hit by a tornado while the facility was operational. Six employees were killed during the storm, and multiple others were injured. Hours prior to the incident, multiple employees requested to leave the facility due to the harsh weather conditions and were denied and threatened with termination if they left before their shift was over.

This unfortunate incident, among others, illustrates the contrast between Amazon's stated intentions and their appli-

cation. Though Amazon describes itself as striving to be 'Earth's Safest Place to Work'; this incident and others like it continue to mar the company's reputation.

Amazon also has made multiple statements both on its website and on various forms of social media where it claims to support racial inclusivity and equity, with many of these statements being made around the time frame of the rise of BLM protests in 2020.

However, there have been multiple lawsuits filed against the corporation in recent months alleging racial discrimination in promotions and wages, with the plaintiffs of several cases stating their belief that Amazon is prioritizing white employees for promotions and pay raises.

Despite the company's statements on racial equity, the existence of these cases illustrates the extent to which these pro-

gressive ideals are upheld on a day-to-day basis at Amazon's warehouses and facilities. The company's social media posts and other forms of communication serve as a false front of progressivism, with little substance or action backing it up.

Both Amazon and Disney, along with a slew of other companies, have been using progressive or woke language in the past half-decade in order to promote the consumption of their products or to attract employees to their workplaces. This trend, however, does not translate into the on-the-ground reality of these companies, as their practices tend to subvert their stated values.

So, the question remains: amidst an onslaught of contradictory statements and actions issued by megacorporations over recent years, how woke can a corporation really be?

Communities

Continued from 30

took the time out of their day to check in with me.

I remember when people reached out to tell me they related to a story I wrote. It's comforting to know that others go through similar struggles, even if they are not always discussed out loud.

I distinctly remember one night in the Performing Arts Center when I was talking to a peer I barely knew at the time, but had always looked up to. We sat in the stairwell for three hours, talking about everything from our favorite flowers to the exhausting, ever-present pressure to succeed. I remember thinking that I finally found someone who just understood. When they offered me a ride home, I told them to take the long route back to my house just so we would have more time to talk.

All of these memories may seem like simple, small moments in time. However, they build community from the ground up.

When I think of community, I also think about how a community watches us grow. In high school specifically, we watch each other grow up. I realize how much we talk about how individuals change over these

years. However, I now realize that my personal growth is barely my own doing, but rather attributed to the communities I find myself in.

When I think of my sense of humor, I think of my best friend who taught me how to find something funny in almost every conversation.

When I think of my love for learning, I think back to conversations with my teachers outside of class. I remember the excitement in their voice when they explain a concept or solve a problem. I try each day to be just as passionate about the work I do.

When I think of my own curiosity, I think of another journalist I worked with who showed me just how much we can learn from talking to other people. I always aspired to replicate how they turned every interview into a conversation. They were so genuinely interested in what the other person had to say.

I think of the section editors in *Blueprint* who spent hours working with me outside of class. I put them on the highest pedestal in my mind from the very first day. When I would call one of them, I felt like I was wasting their time.

However, they never viewed me as the burden I thought I was. They taught me how to put all the thoughts I couldn't

explain out loud onto paper. And they taught me how important it is to ask for help when I'm feeling overwhelmed.

It wasn't just the constant help they provided me with; it was also the texts along the lines of, "Let me know if you need anything, *Blueprint*-related or not. I'm always here if you want to talk."

At the end of this spring, I entered back into a state of suspension, the only familiar place that terrifies me. As I attended school each day, I watched my peers breeze through worksheets and laugh with their friends. I sat at my desk and counted each time the digital clock flashed. As someone who always feels like they are running out of time, I realized how long a minute is.

And still, to this day, time is frozen for me. I'm still terrified of the stillness, just as I was in freshman year.

However, I don't spend the time in my room staring at my bedroom wall. I'm not waiting for the minutes to feel shorter. I'm not only surrounded by robotic figures on a screen.

I have my friend on the phone, and their voice echoes through the once-lonely space. And I know that they will sit with me until time starts ticking again.

Beyond Losing a Woman's Right to Choose

The possible overturn of Roe v. Wade is a monumental step back in fundamental human rights

Acalanes Feminism Club | Contributing Writers

“This will fall on the poorest women in our country. This will fall on the young women who have been abused, who are victims of incest. This will fall on those who have been raped,” Massachusetts Senator Elizabeth Warren stated during a protest on the steps of the Supreme Court.

On May 2, the news corporation *Politico* leaked a Supreme Court draft majority opinion written by conservative justice Samuel Alito. The draft is in favor of overturning *Roe v. Wade*, the landmark Supreme court case that ensures women’s right to have an abortion. This right is a necessary one that must remain intact.

The *Roe v. Wade* case began in 1970 when Norma McCorvey, a woman under the pseudonym Jane Roe, filed a lawsuit against the then-district attorney of Dallas County, Henry Wade, due to Texas’ laws regarding abortion. At the time, abortion in Texas was only allowed in cases where giving birth threatened the woman’s life. Proponents argued that under the right to privacy clauses of the First, Fourth, Fifth, Ninth, and Fourteenth Amendments, women should have the right to decide whether to have an abortion, and the Supreme Court ruled in her favor in 1973.

Today, the case’s opponents argue that the ruling is an extremely loose interpretation of the Constitution and therefore should be overturned, since the Constitution never explicitly states a woman’s right to have an abortion.

The limitation with the argument for a literal interpretation of the Constitution is that women, let alone the issue of abortion, were never included in it; the entire document established freedoms and liberties only in regard



to white men. Women’s rights were fully excluded in the first draft of the Constitution, and therefore women were not able to advocate for the rights they deserved, including the option to get an abortion if necessary.

The immensity of the pro-life movement is largely due to the common misconception that people who label themselves as pro-choice are pro-abortion. In reality, the pro-choice movement centers around allowing each woman the right to make their own decision with regard to their body. Someone can be pro-choice and believe in the right to abortion without ever choosing abortion for themselves.

For those who opt for abortion in situations of rape and incest, women already have to deal with the psychological effects of the event. If they were forced to keep the baby, it would become a reminder of what they went through. Adding on to that, if abortion was outlawed, the woman might not be fit to raise

the baby due to their economic status, living situation, or emotional trauma.

These factors are already extreme, and abortion is usually the last option, as it not only affects a woman’s mental state but also their body with excessive bleeding, illness, and in rare cases, death. Outspoken feminist Gloria Steinem explains this, saying, “It’s not an experience that any woman would choose unless she had to.”

As such, it is vital to think about the aftermath of the overturning of *Roe v. Wade*. This ruling would give states absolute power to create abortion laws, resulting in abortion bans in 23 or more states. In some states, such as Texas, bounties would be instituted, meaning people would be allowed — or encouraged with monetary awards — to turn in women who pursue abortions.

Lastly, the justification for the overturning of *Roe v. Wade* means the Supreme Court would

be able to open up every other case justified by the “right to privacy” clause. This could result in the reopening and the reevaluation of the cases such as *Loving v. Virginia*, which protects interracial marriage, and *Obergefell v. Hodges*, which protects same sex marriage.

Abortion bans will disproportionately affect marginalized groups such as low-income families. Those who are well-off might be able to travel to get abortions, but many others do not have that option. Oftentimes, these are the people that need abortions the most, as they do not have the means to afford childcare or access quality education for their child.

Ultimately, the debate over abortion is about a grab for political power. Whoever ends up with the most control over the issue has the most influence. In America, this is apparent in racial, gender, and sexuality issues. The oppressed are constantly fighting for the same opportunities as the privileged - usually straight, cisgender, white men. It should be noted that the same group of anti-abortion politicians are not supportive of legislation to fund the very social programs needed by the women who cannot afford to keep their children. We can't place the blame on one group

but, historically speaking, this pattern persists.

Steinem recently stated on National Public Radio, “As the great [feminist] Florynce Kennedy used to say, if men could get pregnant, abortion would be a sacrament.” Similarly, the responsibility of using birth control to regulate pregnancy lies entirely on women rather than men. Women already take on the burden of pregnancy and therefore should not be harming their bodies further when men are fully able to share the responsibility of birth control. If women are forced to give up the right to abortion, men have to take sacrifices as well.

It is infuriating to ponder the energy spent by anti-abortion politicians on telling a woman what to do with their body while there is no discussion of what men could easily and safely do to prevent unplanned pregnancy. Indeed, there is a highly effective birth control option for men: the vasectomy. This safe and potentially reversible procedure could help prevent the millions of unplanned pregnancies that happen in the United States each year, reducing the number of abortions needed.

Another form of birth control for both men and women is contraceptive medication.

Applying for permits multiple times is expensive, too. For every Half Dome lottery entry (both pre-season and daily) there is a \$10 fee for the lottery application plus a \$10 fee per hiker. That meant that my dad and I, applying in the preseason lottery five times and in the daily lottery five times, spent \$170 for one hike (adding in the extra \$20 for when we finally received a permit.) While I would argue the experience was definitely worth it, this price raises questions about the equity of the permit system. In addition, hikers must also pay for a campsite or hotel room the night prior (ranging from \$30 to \$500 in the park) because the hike requires a pre-5 a.m. start time, and a \$35 vehicle entrance fee.

Not everyone can afford these fees from hikes, only alienating less-affluent, often people of color from the outdoors. People can revert back to the point that people can still hike, just not all the way through, but why must people have money to experience a should-be free commodity?

The NPS and other permit-issuing agencies like national forests can address this problem by making permit application fees cheaper or eliminating them entirely. They can also spearhead advocacy efforts to increase diversity in their staffing and in the outdoors.

Finally, the permit system may actually make

There is often a stereotype that women are the ones expected to take birth control, when in reality both will be able to, once research is completed regarding different types of birth control.

To combat this issue, Governor Gavin Newsom is constructing a plan that will give those in states where abortion is illegal, transportation and protection to come to California to get a safe abortion. This “abortion safe haven” is one of a few ways in which women will stay protected in the event that the ruling is overturned.

The overturning of *Roe v. Wade* is an infringement on human rights. For our future society, this could likely lead to a domino effect, as other basic human rights may be taken away. Why should the government be able to decide people's rights over their own bodies and who they love? We do not want to grow up in a society that takes away our liberties. Humans deserve to have a choice over their bodies and their personal lives; taking away women's right to abortion is the first step to reversing the progress our country has made towards broadening our basic human rights.

NPS Permit Systems

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like *Free Solo* and *The Dawn Wall*. In response, Yosemite has implemented a permit system for all big-wall, multi day climbs. The permits are not limited, but they allow the park to track usage and prevent human-caused erosion.

Permits, by their nature of regulating human traffic, preserve the wilderness for everybody. While it may seem limiting, permit systems are the only way to let future generations experience the outdoors. In addition, most famous permitted hikes (Half Dome, Angel's Landing, The Narrows, Rim-to-Rim Grand Canyon, Pacific Crest Trail, etc.) are not fully permitted. Hikers can journey through all of these aforementioned hikes partway through before requiring a permit, or if hiked in a day, do not require a permit. Permits protect the most sensitive and most dangerous areas of hike, not prevent the experience of any of it.

That's not to say permit systems are perfect. In fact, they're annoying. Waking up five days or five years in a row to see an email from www.recreation.gov saying, ‘Sorry, your permit application was not successful,’ or receiving that email five years in a row is incredibly discouraging.

dangerous hikes more dangerous. Returning to Half Dome, the cable section is terrifying. However, when hikers know they only have one chance to hike it, they push themselves harder and further than they are capable of doing. Instead of reducing the number of search and rescue efforts Yosemite has to patrol, it may actually increase due to hiker's increased determination and decreased logic.

I saw this firsthand on Half Dome, with someone encouraging their friend to do the cables even though they felt uncomfortable. The friend kept repeating, ‘You only have one chance!’ pressuring them into hiking. The hiker did begin the hike, they quit halfway through the cable section and went down. While the hiker knew their limits, they felt pressured to go beyond them for this rare experience.

Despite the annoyances of the permit system, it truly is the best way to regulate the outdoors. It keeps hikers safer, protects the environment, and protects wilderness regulators. Even if it took five years to get there, the peanut butter and jelly sandwich at the top of Half Dome was certainly worth it.

For more information on this topic, please visit www.recreation.gov and www.lnt.org to learn more about permits, wilderness safety, and outdoor ethics.

It's not a Meme, It's Harassment: Celebrities' Personal Lives

The unfortunate reality-Ye behind the Kanye-Kardashian divorce

Catherine Lomond | Staff Writer

Normally, when people get divorced, they take it up with a divorce lawyer, not millions of people on social media. Over the span of the past three months, I, along with most social media users, have unwillingly been on the wild rollercoaster that is Kim Kardashian's and Kanye West's messy divorce. Looking at Kanye and Pete Davidson photoshopped into the *Captain America: Civil War* posters may have made me laugh when I first saw them, but under the surface resides public and misunderstood harassment to a woman and her children.

This public divorce poses many questions about how harassment is viewed in the public eye; if Kim Kardashian, a woman who has everything, can be harassed online and not be taken seriously, then how can any woman be heard and supported?

Social media influencer Kardashian and rapper West started dating in 2012 and married two years later in 2014. During their six year marriage, they had four kids together. In February 2021, Kardashian officially filed for divorce from West, stating 'irreconcilable differences' as a reason for separation. However, in a Vogue interview Kardashian said that "for so long, I did what made other people happy. And I think in the last two years I decided, I'm going to make myself happy."

In denial of the divorce, West took to social media platforms like Instagram and Twitter to publicly protest, claiming that Kardashian was not letting West see their daughter, Chicago, on a now-deleted Instagram post in January 2022. West claimed that Kardashian didn't invite him to their daughter's birthday party, stating

that he "wasn't allowed to know where her party was." In February, West pleaded to see his family together again in a desperate post of his kids with the captions: "GOD PLEASE BRING OUR FAMILY BACK TOGETHER."

West also harassed both Kardashian and her current boyfriend, Saturday Night Live's Pete Davidson, in February. In numerous deleted posts, West spread baseless rumors about Davidson's past relationship with Ariana Grande, calling Davidson "Skete", and incited violence upon him in song lyrics like "God saved me from that crash / Just so I can beat Pete Davidson's ass."

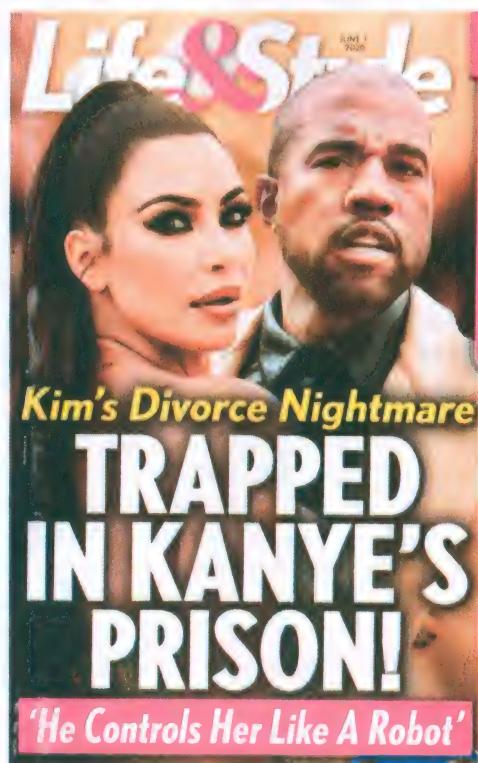
It is important to mention that West has bipolar disorder. Due to this, West experiences manic episodes if not medicated, which is a treatment he has stated he does not prefer. While I acknowledge that struggling with treatment may play a role in his behavior, it is not an excuse for harassing his wife and her boyfriend. It only worsens the stigma against mental illnesses, villainizing people with illnesses that have extreme and manic symptoms. It is a personal choice to be unmedicated, one that no one has the right to make for him. However, it is a luxury and privilege for him to prefer to not be on medication, as thousands of people in the country cannot afford medication if it is not insured.

While West chose to post on social media, Kardashian did not consent to her issues being aired out online for millions of people. She also did not consent to West's posting their private text conversations either or violent threats against her new partner. Navigating a divorce is hard enough as it is, especially with kids, and no one deserves to be harassed by her ex-husband and in turn by thousands of his supporters. It is also not fair to their kids who are stuck between two parents, one of whom is villainizing their mother, and the other who is moving on with another man.

It is true that many people have mixed opinions about Kardashian, but just be-

cause she is a celebrity does not take away her right to privacy or consent. It does not matter that her job revolves around publicity, like posting her life on social media and starring in reality TV shows. How public she chooses to make her life is irrelevant because harassment is never excusable.

Kardashian has all the wealth and privilege, but still isn't immune to a toxic relationship and harassment. It sends a message that if someone who possesses all the resources can fall victim to harassment, abuse, and toxic relationships, then everyone less fortunate than her can as well. Turning this publicly-displaced divorce into an internet meme only instills fear and doubt in women, posing the question of who will be taken seriously if Kardashian's trauma will be seen as a national joke.



Courtesy Photo/Life & Style Magazine



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Sports

The Oakland Athletics' Shamful Tank

Tom Bequette | Staff Writer

By the end of the season, there might be more feral cats attending Oakland Athletics baseball games than fans, and the owners are fine with it.

During this past off-season, the Oakland Athletics embarked on one of their mass fire sales, where they traded nearly every notable player in an effort to cut their payroll and tank for better draft picks in the future.

Athletics owner John Fisher has been running the club into the ground in order to make himself a profit, and in doing so, he is destroying the team's chances at success, driving attendance down, and threatening to move the team to Las Vegas if the city does not meet his erroneous demands.

Fisher has routinely been the cheapest owner in major league sports, even letting the Athletics' stadium fall into borderline apocalyptic conditions, as it is routinely ranked among the very worst stadiums in Major League Baseball (MLB).

Fisher has also cheaped out on players, and the A's have regularly had one of, if not the lowest payrolls in the league. This year stands out, as the Athletics' entire payroll is just about equal to what some MLB stars make on their own. For instance, Nationals ace Max Scherzer will make 44 million dollars this year, just slightly above the entire A's roster at 43.3 million dollars.

Going into the season, there was hope that the A's would actually add pieces and build around their solid existing team. The A's almost made the playoffs last year, and for the first time since 2018, the team would be in the MLB's revenue sharing program. This means that the A's would receive money from some of the higher revenue-earning teams to fix up their stadium and increase their payroll.

However, instead of putting the money towards the team, Fisher lowered the pay-

roll enough so that he could pocket some of the money the team received from the revenue sharing program.

Fisher's stinginess has gone so far that the MLB is seriously considering instituting a cap floor, or a minimum amount that a team must spend on their payroll to ensure some degree of competitiveness and to discourage tanking. A cap floor that MLB owners proposed last year has the floor at 100 million dollars, nearly double the A's current payroll.

Furthermore, Fisher has exponentially increased ticket prices despite all of this cost-cutting, making the Athletics' tickets the eleventh most expensive in the MLB. As a result, the team has hit record lows for attendance to start the season, including the two lowest rates of attendance in 42 years, back-to-back. However, the attendance rate of feral cats has increased substantially, as about 30 to 40 currently live in the stadium.

The question remains: why would Fisher do all of this, which, while making him money, ultimately decreases attendance at games and ruins the city's relationship with the team?

In reality, Fisher doesn't care whether people go to games or not, because if people stop going, then he can use that as justification to ship the team off to Las Vegas, a move Fisher has been looking into ever since the Raiders left Oakland and moved to Vegas.

Either people go to the games, allowing Fisher to continue to make a massive amount of money and to get a new stadium that costs hundreds of millions of dollars in public funding to build, or people don't go, and he gets to move to Vegas and make piles of money there.

The obvious move for the city would be to simply let go of the team, rather than paying for a brand new stadium

for a tanking organization with high ticket prices. Unfortunately, it's just not that simple, because important sports organizations like the A's can be integral to creating a thriving city.

Mitchell Schwarzer, an Oakland historian, professor, and author of a novel on Oakland infrastructure, stated in an interview with The Ringer that "the A's are a blessing to Oakland, as they bring crowds to adjacent Jack London Square," and fill "its vacant spaces with places to eat, drink and shop."

The A's are important for Oakland's long-term success as a city, especially after the Raiders and the Golden State Warriors left. This all gives Fisher the leverage he needs to demand a first-class stadium from the city for a non-competitive team. He is essentially holding the city hostage for his own personal gain.

Until something changes, the A's are no longer the lovable, underdog team they once were. Now, all because of a greedy individual who will do anything he can to deepen his own pocketbook, the franchise will continue to crumble.



Baseball

Henry Hagel | Print Sports Editor

After a rocky start, the men's baseball team (15-7 overall, 8-2 league) is red hot and looks to take the Diablo Athletic League (DAL) championship and make a run into the North Coast Section (NCS) playoffs.

After starting the season with just two wins in their first six games, the Dons needed to turn their play around. On March 17, the team did just that, completing their sweep over College Park with a 4-3 victory.

The Dons swept the Northgate Broncos with a 4-0 win on March 22 and an 11-3 victory on March 24. Senior Benjy Braunstein started the series pitching a complete game shutout.

The Dons continued the winning streak with a 5-0 win over Monte Vista on March 26. Ethan Rowland carried the weight for the team, pitching 7 shutout innings.

The following week, on March 30, the team took a win by a score of 4-2 over Las Lomas. Braunstein pitched another complete game, this time giving up only one earned run.

Unfortunately for the Dons, the six game win

streak came to an end with a 0-2 loss to the Berkeley Yellowjackets on April 5.

However, this loss didn't knock the Dons off track, as they went on to crush the Saint Mary's Panthers 18-4 on April 9. Senior Miles Bergman led the way with three hits, along with three runs batted in (RBIs).

On April 14, the Dons were able to etch out a 3-2 win over Pittsburg with a rare walk off. Nico O'Rourke was hit by a pitch with 2 outs to knock in the winning run.

The Dons completed their non-league regular season games with a 3-1 victory over Tamalpais on April 16.

The team went on to split games with one of their Lamorinda rivals, Miramonte. On April 19, the Dons won 5-0. The Matadors took the next game, with Acalanes losing 6-7 the following afternoon.

The Dons then matched up with their other Lamorinda rival, Campolindo. Acalanes lost the first game of the series 2-5 on April 26. Two days later Acalanes won 4-1. The team was led by the efforts of sophomore phenom Henry Souza, as he pitched another complete game with no earned runs.

The Dons managed to sweep the Benicia Pan-

thers. On May 3, they won 1-0, coasting off of Braunstein's complete game shutout. The Dons were able to win the second game with their bats, crushing the Panthers 20-4 on May 5.

With only two more games to be played, the Dons are starting to look towards the postseason challenges that await them. Depending on how they do in their league matchup against Clayton Valley, the Dons could go on to be the DAL champions.

"We want to win at all costs. Obviously we'd love to come first in DAL and fight through NCS, but we try to keep the mentality of focusing on the present, trying to win today and not worrying about what is to come," Braunstein said.



Courtesy Photo/Richard O'Rourke



Courtesy Photo/Chuck Johnston

Softball

Griffin Ruebner | Head Section Editor

The women's softball team (7-9 overall, 4-1 league) looks to turn their season around and finish the year on a high note.

The team matched up against Deer Valley on March 24. The Dons handily defeated the Wolverines, winning the game by a score of 8-2 on the shoulders of an Acalanes offensive flurry.

Five days later, the Dons crushed Miramonte on March 29. The team's infield and outfield both played excellently, shutting out the Matadors in a 12-0 game.

"I think we have progressed most with our defense and trusting one another to make plays," junior Hailey Stripling said.

Unfortunately, Acalanes lost a hard-fought league game to Las Lomas by a score of 3-8 on March 31.

The team has performed at a high level this year, especially considering the lack of upperclassmen on the squad.

"We have three freshmen and two sophomores starting. It is very difficult playing

against girls three to four years older," head coach Vic Silva said.

However, through practice and hard work, the athletes in the program have bettered their skills and become stronger players.

"From the [junior varsity] team to varsity, every girl in the softball program has worked hard and made themselves better softball players," Silva said.

After a long break, the team returned to the field to take on Albany on April 18. Despite another strong performance from Acalanes, the Cougars came out on top and defeated the Dons by a score of 4-8.

The next day, the team bounced back, crushing Mount Diablo by a score of 12-2. In blowout games such as these, the squad's excellent teamwork is on display.

"I think our greatest strength is playing as a team. We get along well and play for one another. No one is afraid to [sacrifice] bunt to move the runner or lay out for a play to save our pitcher," Stripling said.

The Dons played three games in four days, losing 8-9 to St. Patrick-St. Vincent on April 25, defeating Ygnacio Valley 11-1 on April 26, and winning against Mira-

monte by a score of 15-2 on April 28.

In a rivalry matchup against Campolindo on May 2, the Dons crushed the Cougars, defeating them with ease by a score of 15-4.

On May 3, the team lost another tough game to Las Lomas, this time by a score of 3-7. However, the Dons quickly bounced back, blowing out Mount Diablo by a score of 16-4 on May 5.

As the regular season comes to a close, the team begins to shift their attention towards the North Coast Section (NCS) playoffs, with dreams of winning a championship.

"I hope we will make the [postseason]. I think we will, and I think we could make some noise in the playoffs," Silva said.

Sports

Men's Lacrosse

Andrew Habas | Staff Writer

The men's lacrosse (12-8 overall, 5-2 league) capped their solid season off with a run in both the Diablo Athletic League (DAL) and North Coast Section (NCS) playoffs.

The team took a win against Berkeley on April 12 by a score of 10-6. Juniors Zach Appel and Cooper Olson each had multiple goals for the Dons.

Two days later, on April 14, the team followed up with a huge win against Clayton Valley by a score of 19-3. Everyone on the team contributed to the blowout win.

Following the two big wins, the team looked to build on their success and get closer to qualifying for NCS by beating a very strong Piedmont team. Unfortunately, the team lost a back and forth game in overtime by a narrow score of 14-15.

Following the tough loss, the team had to compete against a very talented Miramonte team, and despite their efforts, they came up short and lost 8-14.

Despite the two losses, the team came together and pulled off a huge win against their cross town rival Campolindo to advance to the Diablo Athletic League (DAL) championship on Friday against Miramonte.

"We came in knowing Campo would think they could walk all over us, and we started out strong. We ended up going down two at half, and came out firing in the second half, going up three in the third. We ended up going into OT ... but we wouldn't make the same mistakes, and we were able to score in OT," junior George Churchill said.

Senior Jake Henderson secured the win with a late goal, ensuring Acalanes a spot in the league championship against Miramonte.

Unfortunately, the team suffered a loss and fell to the Matadors by a score of 7-15. Despite the outcome of the DAL championship, the team qualified for NCS.

"I have a feeling we will be able to make a deep run in NCS coming off the win against Campo, because it carries momentum into the playoffs. We will really need to come together as a team and play well if we want to go far though," junior Joey Bettencourt said.

The team played their first NCS game on May 3rd, and they beat University High School soundly by a score of 13-2. This sent the team onto the next round of playoffs.

"Like all teams, we build off momentum, so hopefully we can continue to play well throughout the rest of the playoffs," Bettencourt said.

On May 5, the Dons faced off against Tamalpais. Unfortunately, the team came up short and lost 5-11. However, the Dons still have a lot to look forward to with a young, talented team.

"We had a pretty good season, and it sucks to see it end, but I am looking forward to next year," Churchill said.



Courtesy Photo/Reneé Sweeney

Women's Lacrosse

Kea Yoshinaka | Liaison Editor

As the season came to an end, the women's Lacrosse team (7-11 overall, 6-2 league) gave a valiant effort in their playoff games, but were not able to prevail.

The Dons played well against Monte Vista on March 23, but they were unable to close the game out, losing by a score of 2-3. The team also lost their next two games, with a 7-14 loss against Head-Royce on March 25 and a 5-19

loss against California High on March 29.

The team picked themselves back up on March 31 and pulled through with a 12-3 win against College Park. Sophomore Addie Martin stood out with 11 saves, while Maya Wang and Haley Rurka combined to score seven goals.

The team continued their winning streak, and on April 15, the Dons took a 12-7 win against Berkeley. The Acalanes offense was once again stellar.

On April 19, the team lost to Piedmont by a score of 7-10. This game was followed by another close loss against Miramonte with a final score of 8-10 on April 22.

Coming off the pair of losses, the Dons needed to recover and focus on what was to come, because on April 26, the Dons faced off against Northgate in the first round of the Diablo Athletic League playoffs. Unfortunately they came up short and lost to the Broncos, with a final score of 7-8.

The squad lost their final game against Marin Academy in the North Coast Section (NCS) playoffs by a score of 3-5 on May 3.

As their season came to an end, the team's memories still remained, and one thing most players took away was the amazing team at-

mosphere.

"This was by far my favorite season I've had at Acalanes yet. The team is super bonded and we have all become super close to the point where we are able to just have fun and play together easily without worrying about winning and losing," senior Elise Flagg said.

The tradition of Senior Night continued this year to celebrate the graduating class, and both the junior varsity (JV) and varsity teams participated.

"Senior night was really cute. The underclassmen decorated the locker room for us with posters and decorations and it was really cute. The JV team decorated our cars, we got personalized parking spots, and overall there were just a lot of different surprises that made the night super special for the seniors," Flagg said.

Seniors have an especially emotional take on the end of the season, and some nostalgically look back on their high school athletic careers.

"As a senior it's been super bittersweet throughout the season. After playing for eleven years, I cannot imagine not playing with the same people I have for so long. Lacrosse has been a huge part of my life, so it is going to be sad to see it come to an end," Flagg said.



Courtesy Photo/David Rumberg

Track and Field

Zach Snyder | Managing Editor

As spring sports approach the end of their season, the track and field team wraps up a historic year full of countless school records and personal records (PR). Securing first place in the Diablo Athletic League (DAL) with a 5-0 record, the men's team heads towards Tri Valley and North Coast Sectionals (NCS) with the women's team right next to them earning second place in DAL with a 4-1 record.

On March 16, Acalanes' men's and women's track and field teams defeated Las Lomas, with the men winning 84-25 and the women winning 79-58. Junior Sophi MacKay had a strong display with a 100 meter PR of 13.45 seconds, securing second place in the event.

On March 18 and 19, Acalanes long distance runners participated in the Dublin Distance Fiesta, the largest track meet in Northern California. In the 1600 meter, Sam Dempsey-Fehling, TJ Cronin, and Peter Buchel all nearly broke the five minute barrier.

Over the same weekend, a small selection of Acalanes athletes competed at the Eddie Hart

Invitational on March 19. Carly Harriman won the high jump event after clearing five feet.

On March 22, the track and field team returned to their dual meets. Facing off against Northgate, both the men and women continued their undefeated streak. The women's team won 83-52 and the men's team won 97-24.

In a meet against Miramonte on March 30, the Dons continued their hot streak, crushing the Matadors. Junior Brody Lim won the triple jump event while setting a new PR of 37'. Along with Lim, junior Tyler Hunt ran a 1:58.58 in the 800 meter, establishing a new PR and winning his race.

In their final league meet against Campolindo on April 20, the Acalanes men's team secured an undefeated season, winning 98-38 and claiming first place in league. With their first loss by a score of 54 to 82, the women's team took second place in DAL. Once again, sophomore Olivia Williams demonstrated her prowess with a new school record for the 3200 meter with a time of 10:24:85.

After a very successful season, the squad looks ahead towards DAL.

"The next big thing is to show up and show out at DAL trials and Finals. We have a very strong

team with multiple athletes in every event ... and our goal is to get as many of them to Trivalley, NCS, and State as possible," sophomore Logan Farzan said.

At the DAL Championship Trials, the men's team placed second and the women's team placed fifth. Paul Kuhner achieved another PR in the 100 meter with a time of 10.75 seconds and won first place.

With strong performances all around, the team now will head to Trivalley and NCS.

"I think that the Acalanes track program is a very special program compared to the rest of the teams in our area. There's not only a competitive aura in the air but a very team-like love and happiness for the sport on the track," senior Lauren Yee said.



Courtesy Photo/Alexandria Mathias

Men's Tennis

Emerson Brown | Staff Writer

As the end of their season rapidly approaches, the men's tennis team (9-4 overall, 6-4 league) has maintained a great record and has strong motivation going into end of the season competitions.

The team went on a four-game winning streak that began with a win against Northgate on March 29. Sophomore Tucker Brewer ended the match by winning a superset tie break, bringing the team to win the match by a score of 6-3.

Chemistry is vital for tennis teams to succeed, so when doubles partners change, it can be hard for the duo to keep the same momentum. Senior Tyler Holder and frosh Kaya Hobernrechts played as a doubles team for the first time against Northgate.

"It was hard, at first, to play without [my usual partner] and have someone else play. [Kaya] definitely played differently than [my usual partner], but we both adjusted and we ended up playing really well together," Holder said.

The team went into their second match that

week with confidence, and on March 31, the Dons beat College Park 7-2.

After a two week break, the team came back to play Las Lomas on April 19 and swept them with a 9-0 win.

The Dons played Campolindo the next day and squeaked out a 5-4 win. In a rocky start, the team went down 1-4, but they came back and won four matches in a row.

In a bittersweet end to the regular season, the Dons lost in a tight 4-5 match against Miramonte on April 26.

Although a loss is never good, the Dons were proud that they could compete so closely with one of the best teams in the state.

"We did so much better than I thought we would have. They must have been scared because we could have taken their undefeated record away from them. I am really proud of the team, and if we could play them again, I think we could win," Holder said.

The team has put an emphasis on camaraderie this year, with junior captain Luke Brightbill hosting a captain's practice every Friday.

"I just wanted to bring some extra team bonding, especially when it comes to actually playing tennis. I would bring out the balls and we would play some fun games. If we want-



Blueprint Photo/Liam McGlynn

ed to, we would play matches. We had music in the background, and overall, it was just to decompress [after] the week. It helped when it came to getting to know each other, and allowed for tennis to be less serious and just for fun," Brightbill said.

Players are excited for the Diablo Athletic League (DAL) competitions and team and individual North Coast Section (NCS) competitions, despite difficult opposition.

"For DAL, we're generally just looking to have fun and get some good matches in against good opponents. I think NCS will definitely be more competitive for the team, but we have high confidence and a good outlook going into the postseason tournaments," senior Matthew Muren said.

Sports

Men's Volleyball

Liam McGlynn | Staff Writer

Despite a losing streak during the middle of the season, the men's volleyball team (7-12 overall, 1-7 league) worked to finish off the season on a high note with a series of wins, carrying solid momentum going into the North Coast Section (NCS) playoffs.

Beginning the season with a 2-1 record, the team was off to a strong start. However, the team faced a tough schedule from then on out, leading to a series of losses.

Coming off a win against Monte Vista on March 18, the Dons lost a back-and-forth battle against the Northgate Broncos by a score of 1-3.

The team bounced back in the next game on March 23 with a dominant 3-1 win over De Anza after losing a close first set. Two days later, the Dons fell short against the Dublin Gaels in a 1-3 loss.

A week later, the team faced College Park at home in a league match. College Park beat out the Dons 3-1.

Next, the team traveled north to Granite Bay for the Granite Bay Men's Volleyball Tour-

nament. The team kicked off the tournament with a straight-set win against Christian Brothers from Sacramento, Calif. In their second match of the tournament, the team matched up against Clovis West, a squad ranked number 13 in the nation. Clovis West pulled out a 2-0 victory. Next, the Dons played against Campolindo for the second time this season, but they unfortunately lost 0-2. In the team's fourth and final match of the tournament, the Dons lost to Bella Vista of Fair Oaks, Calif. by a score of 1-2.

To start off the final stretch of the season, the Dons played against Campo for the third time on April 13. The team was unable to rally and lost the game 0-3. Nevertheless, the matches against Campo always proved exciting, due to the rivalry between the teams.

"One highlight from this season is playing against Campolindo. I am friends with all of the players on Campo and most of them are on my club team," Bicker said.

Coming off a tough loss, the Dons came together to win a nail-biter against district rival Las Lomas in a 3-2 victory on April 19.

"Our strategy was to get all the best players involved while trying to play smart. We had to pick and choose our spots on the floor so that

we could get the kill without getting blocked," senior Erik Moen said.

The team continued their win-streak against Alhambra on April 26 with a decisive 3-1 victory.

In the end, the Dons finished off their regular season with a 0-3 loss against the Broncos.

The Dons kicked off their first game of the NCS playoffs with a 3-0 win over the 13 seed, Kennedy, on May 3. They then went on to the quarterfinals on May 5, where they took a 3-1 win over the 5 seed De Anza. The Dons now look to play the 1 seed Bishop O'Dowd in the semifinals on May 10.

"I am looking forward to making it deep into NCS and hopefully winning it all. I want to extend our season as long as possible," Moen said.



Blueprint Photo/Liam McGlynn

Men's Golf

Ben Brekke | Print Feature Editor

After a solid regular season, the men's golf team (7-5 overall, 4-3 league) moves into the Diablo Athletic League (DAL) championship and towards the off-season.

On March 18, the Dons teed off against the Alameda Hornets. Acalanes recorded a season-high 251 strokes and lost 251-231.

Three days later, on March 22, the Dons played the Miramonte Matadors. The Dons improved significantly after the previous week's tough loss, but still fell to the Matadors 227-217.

On March 23, the Dons played the Hornets for a second time. But they still were not able to

take down Alameda, losing 220-203.

On March 28, the Dons matched up against their school rivals, the Campolindo Cougars. Although putting up an impressive performance, the Dons fell to the Cougars, 209-200.

Two days after the Campolindo match, the Dons teed off against the Benicia Panthers. The Dons put up a solid score while Benicia struggled to gain momentum. Acalanes beat the Panthers by a score of 226-263.

Riding off of the momentum of their recent win, the Dons matched up against the Northgate Broncos on April 11. The match was close, but in the end, the Dons took down the Broncos 213-216.

On April 18, the Dons played the Las Lomas Golden Knights. Acalanes put up yet another standout performance, taking down the Knights by 30 strokes. The final score of the match was 212-242.

After three wins in a row, the Dons found themselves on a hot streak. They had momentum on their side with the upcoming DAL playoffs.

"I think it's all due to our team atmosphere. We play better when we are in a good mood, and that is set by the energy created from the players and coaches. There is a lot of individual talent in golf, but it takes the team to come to-

gether and help each other out to win matches," Krey said.

Just two days after their match with Las Lomas, on April 20, the Dons teed off against the Clayton Valley Ugly Eagles. The Dons took a solid lead and held onto it, winning the match 235-225.

On April 18, the Dons matched up against Campolindo for the second time this season. While Acalanes had a season-best performance with only 207 strokes, they were no match for the Cougars, who put up an incredible sub-200 score. The final score of the match was 207-187.

At the DAL playoff on May 2, the Dons competed against five other teams. The team struggled throughout the match and ultimately ended with 425 strokes, coming in fourth place. However, this was not the end of the Dons' play-off run, and their season is not over yet.

"Many felt as though they could or should have played better, but the boys should feel proud of their efforts. We had a few anxious days waiting to see if we made it to NCS, but we learned our performance at the DAL tournament combined with our season was strong enough to qualify for NCS, which is exciting," coach Cassidy Mulholland said.



Blueprint Photo/Gus McKinney

Swimming

Jacqueline Kuhner | Print Arts Editor

The swim team (1-2 men's, 0-3 women's) aims to finish strong as they dive into the postseason.

On March 31, the team faced Miramonte. Captain and senior Heidi Heffelfinger placed first in the 200-yard freestyle with a time of 2:02.56. Another event winner was sophomore Taryn Veronda, who swam a 1:04.16 in the 100-yard backstroke. A prominent swimmer for the men's events was junior Christian Gotterup, who won the 50-yard freestyle with a time of 22.79 and the 100-yard freestyle with a time of 49.91. Despite the excellent efforts of many athletes, Acalanes lost in the end.

The team put up some more great times on April 22 against Northgate. Junior Grant Eubanks won the men's 100-yard backstroke with a time of 1:00.97. The Acalanes women's 400-yard freestyle relay also took home first place with a time of 3:44.31. The team consisted of Heffelfinger and juniors Lila Waechter, Sophi Makay and Sara Archer. Unfortunately, the

Dons took another loss in the end.

Many swimmers felt a sense of anticipation leading up to the Diablo Athletic League (DAL) trials on April 28, and the finals on April 30.

"I'm really looking forward to the end of the year swim meet where we get to swim against all the different swim teams from all over the Diablo Athletic League, and just see if our hard work pays off," senior Matthew Brock-Utne said.

At the DAL trials, junior Audrey Cox placed first in the women's 200-yard freestyle with a time of 5:16.15, popping her seed time by over six seconds. Right behind her was Heidi Heffelfinger, who placed second after swimming a 5:17.08. The women's 200-yard freestyle relay also placed first with a time of 1:38.89. The team was made up of Waechter and juniors Kaitlyn Keely, Sadie Suppiger, and Sophi MacKay.

Two days later, the DAL finals kicked off at Campolindo High School. Heidi Heffelfinger placed second in the women's 500-yard freestyle with a time of 5:13.02, breaking her personal record by over four seconds. The women's 200-yard freestyle relay also placed second

with a time of 1:38.25.

Chemistry and bonding are both vital for team spirit, especially for the swim team. This season, the team focused on growing their chemistry through a series of bonding activities, including a large team breakfast.

"We had one practice where our entire team went out to have breakfast together instead of practicing, and then we had swim team parties and things like that," Brock-Utne said.

Of course, with the end of every season comes a hard goodbye for the seniors and their teammates.

"I'm sad that [the season is] over but I'm very happy to have gotten the times that I've had with swimming," Heidi Heffelfinger said.



Blueprint Photo/Mara Korzeniowska

Competitive Cheer

Mason Archer and Aaron Vaserman | Staff Writers

With a formidable season nearly over for the newest sports program at Acalanes, the competitive cheer team plans to solidify their season by bringing awareness to what the sport has to offer.

Motivating and encouraging teammates is a top priority within the squad, as team chemistry is essential to performing well in competition.

"My favorite thing about competitive cheer is stunting and being with my team. We all care for each other so much and it makes the sport so much more fun. I am constantly motivated by my teammates and coaches. They always make me want to be better," junior Drew Ebner said.

Cheerleading is a versatile sport with different types of contests, yet the sport tends to be boxed into the most popular form of cheer, sideline.

"I'd say it's different because it kind of gets overlooked. It's more challenging than a lot of people think because they have the image of

sideline cheer in their minds but it's nothing like sideline," senior Trinity Conway said.

Competitive cheer involves a complex series of tumbling, stunts, and other maneuvers that all require an impressive amount of skill to perfect.

"Competitive cheer is similar to other sports because we compete against other teams and are constantly trying to better ourselves through conditioning and practice. It is different because of the way the game is set up and what we perform. Every team in the league is given the same routines that we have to perfect and perform," Ebner said.

While competition remains at the heart of all sports, bringing awareness to the program is a major goal for the cheer team, as the squad hopes to garner more attention for future seasons.

"It's hard because a lot of people overlook it and don't consider it a sport but we try to get people to try out and come to the games. We tell all of our friends and tell them to tell other people too," Conway said. "We started an Instagram account to post about it to spread awareness that way, so we're definitely trying to bring more attention to it."

Regardless of what the future may hold for the competitive cheer program, Conway remains



Blueprint Photo/Emma Uffelman

adamant about participating as much as possible before her time is up.

"Our season is technically over, but we're going to continue to have open gyms and practices for next year. I plan on showing up to the open gyms even though I'm graduating, I'll just be there to help coach," Conway said.

The Dons are hopeful that others will see the value and enjoyment of competitive cheer.

"My hopes for next season are that we will have a bigger team so we can have more alternates for positions. It's difficult to beat bigger and stronger teams when we are such a small group," Ebner said. "I also hope to get up to higher levels in our routines which we will accomplish through hard work and tons of practice."

Crosswords

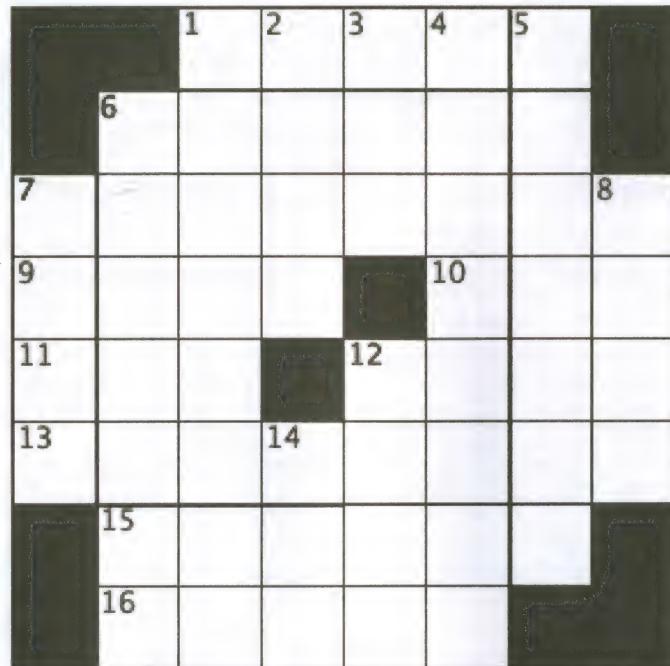
Created by Henry Hagel and Ben Brekke

Across:

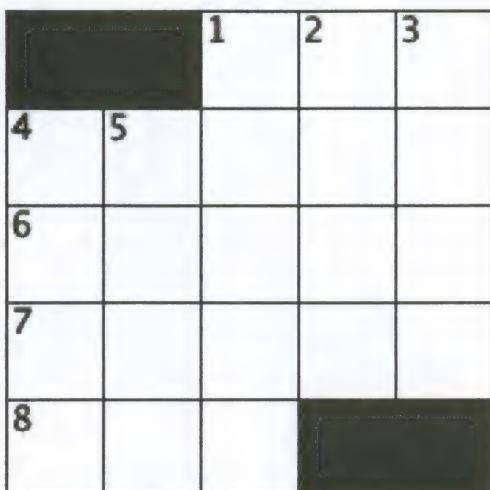
1. University located in both Ohio and Florida
6. Order this sauce with Fish 'n Chips
7. First official state university in California
9. One of the largest species in the deer family
10. To order something solo at a Spanish restaurants: " _____ carte"
11. Slang for trains running on elevated railroads, often in Chicago
12. _____ Roberts University
13. The opposite of masculine
15. When you space out and have to _____ a couple paragraphs
16. A dog lets out a _____ when it sees the mailman.

Down:

1. People skilled at hitting targets
2. Synonym for "irritates" or "annoys"
3. On her birthday she _____ a cake
4. A _____ mosquito carries a dangerous disease
5. Land of Leprechauns and Potatoes
6. People who will help you out if you want to make a deposit at a bank.
7. "Where's the _____?": Catchphrase used as a slogan for Wendy's in 1984
8. 4-letter University with one of the top law schools in the country
12. George Clooney is _____, an American Drama Show.
14. To ensure that you have financial security when you retire, have one of these



Find the answers to this issue's crossword on
www.acalanesblueprint.com



Across:

1. Ex: Waze
4. Meryl Streep's given first name
6. Land of Pizza
7. The class clown _____ attention
8. _____ Dance - Drake

Down:

1. "You're in _____ danger!"
2. Dog _____
3. Simon _____
4. Nickname for Emilio
5. Synonym for "a boat load"



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Sudoku

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	5	2				
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			6	7		
7	2	8				
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BLUEPRINT CLASS



Freschetta Warres



Alex Ariker



Zack Lara



Aysha Craig



Emerson Brown



Keith Johnson



Ella Alpert



Julia Poole



Shrida Pandey



Kayli Harley

OF 2022



Graham Klingler



Aaron Vaserman



Sabrina Agazzi



Liam McGlynn



Stella Heo



Daniel Adri



Tom Bequette



Arlyne Noguera



Mason Archer



Catherine Lomond

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Commemorating Natalie Hiatt

Acalanes Blueprint

On April 10, 2022, Acalanes High School learned of the loss of junior Natalie Hiatt. *Blueprint* would like to take the opportunity to celebrate Natalie's life and her contributions to our Acalanes community.

Born October 20, 2004, Natalie was the second daughter of Karen and Steve Hiatt. Her older sister Kaylin graduated from Acalanes in 2020 and her younger sister Victoria (Tori) is currently in eighth grade. Natalie was surrounded by a loving family, many family friends, a committed partner, and a close group of friends at Acalanes.

A true student of life, Natalie excelled in school and loved learning, from science to math, history to English, Natalie could get as easily lost in imagining the complexities of particle physics as in annotating characters' motivations in a Bronte novel. To fuel her passion for learning, Natalie was involved in many extracurricular communities on campus. Mock Trial, Robotics Club, *Blueprint*, and Lacrosse benefitted from Natalie's keen mind, quick wit, and curious outlook on the world.

Blueprint was strengthened by Natalie's strong voice and humility of purpose. These qualities came through in her many and varied contributions to our publication this year. She wrote for every section of the paper and contributed to our online product. A sought-after collaborator, Natalie worked with almost every member of *Blueprint* and she loved interviewing her subjects. Natalie was recently named Opinion Section Editor for the 2022-23 school year and won a National Quill and Scroll award for her article on local food banks, published in November 2021.

The Lafayette community was joined with family and friends from far and wide at St. Perpetua church on Thursday April 21 for a vigil in Natalie's name. Several of Natalie's family members and close friends spoke at the service, highlighting Natalie's love of nature, animals, and learning. Natalie's funeral was held at the same location on Friday April 22 at St. Perpetua where Father John Kasper led the Catholic mass commemorating Natalie's life.

Together with our Acalanes Dons and our wider Lafayette community, *Blueprint* mourns the loss of our colleague, our student, our friend, Natalie Hiatt.





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